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RESTORATION AND REVIVAL,

OR,

Times of Refreshing.

BY THE

REV. JAMES G. SMALL,

Berwick

AUTHOR OF "THE HIGHLANDS," "THE SCOTTISH MARTYRS," "SONGS OF THE VINEYARD," ETC.

THEOLOGICAL HALL

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PREFATORY NOTE.

[The Publishers have the pleasure of submitting the following note, as explanatory of the circumstances in which the Author undertook, in compliance with a wish expressed by many, to prepare for the press his thoughts on the subject of Revival. The names appended are well known to the public. They are those of the Rev. Mr. Wilson, Clerk of the Synod alluded to, and author of "The Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ;" the Rev. Mr. Nixon, Montrose, author of "Pleas for the Sanctification of the Sabbath," &c.; and the Rev. Mr Foote, Brechin, author of "Incidents in the Life of our Saviour," and "Closing Scenes in the Life of Christ." To these reverend gentlemen early copies of the greater part of the work were sent.]

The germ of what follows was delivered, in the form of a sermon, at the opening of the Free Church Synod of Angus and Mearns. The author received the thanks of the Synod for it, not as an empty compliment, but from a high appreciation of the fine sentiments which it contained, and of the elevated style in which these sentiments were embodied. In its present ex-

panded form, we are satisfied that it will be found to have undergone a decided improvement,—many kindred topics being introduced, and greater fulness given to the great theme of Church Revival. We have much pleasure in attaching this recommendation of it. We feel quite sure that it will be generally appreciated on account of its earnestness, freshness, and eloquence.

WILLIAM WILSON.
WILLIAM NIXON.
A. L. R. FOOTE.

NOTE BY THE AUTHOR.

The Author is unwilling to add anything, by way of preface, to a work which has expanded so far beyond what he had any idea of when it began to pass through the press. If he has been enabled to speak any word in season, glory be to "the Lord who gave the word;" not to him who is but one of the "great company of those that publish it."

The nature and design of the book, as well as the order and concatenation of the subjects discussed, may be gathered by glancing over the following Analysis.

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RESTORATION AND REVIVAL.

"Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean. Shake thyself from the dust; arise and sit down, O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion. For thus saith the Lord, Ye have sold yourselves for nought; and ye shall be redeemed without money."—Isaiah lii. 1-3

PART I.

RESTORATION FOR THE LOST.

Looking through the vista opened by the Spirit of Prophecy through those dark clouds which were gathering blacker and heavier over Judah and Jerusalem, Isaiah hailed the glad beams of promise which shot through the gloom that was closing around. Not only did he discern the future restoration of the Jews from that Babylonish captivity which was impending over them; but, beyond that event, and typified by it, he descried the far greater deliverance which was to be wrought out by the Messiah for the Israel of God,—a deliverance from the bondage of Sin and of Satan. "He saw the day of Christ, and was glad." Rapt into future times, he vividly realized, and graphically pourtrayed, "the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow."

Throughout that passage, in particular, from which our text is taken, the emancipation of Judah from the Babylonish yoke is spoken of in language which, in a spiritual sense, is beautifully descriptive of the redemption purchased by Christ for his covenant people. Such is the character of the expressions now before us; and, as the prophecy proceeds, the reference to the great salvation becomes more and more direct; till, in the concluding portion of the chapter, we find the prophet absorbed in the contemplation of the sufferings and triumphs of the Messiah; and we hear from his fire-touched lips the prelude of that wonderful strain in which, throughout the following chapter, he dilates upon the deep humiliation and the glorious exaltation of the incarnate Son of God.

In the verses which we at present design to consider in their evangelical application, Jerusalem is represented as a captive maid, sitting on the ground, and clad in raiment which betokens a state of bondage and degradation. But the call is addressed to her to awake from the torpor of dull despondency,—to arise, and shake herself from the dust,—to cast off her bonds, and exchange the garb of a slave for the beautiful garments appropriate to a condition of freedom and prosperity, of gladness and exultation.

But the question arises, how shall she, who is thus down-trodden and afflicted, effect her liberation, and spring from the dust to assume a seat of honour and dignity? Is it not a mockery of her woe and of her helplessness thus to exhort her to efforts for which she has no strength and no resources? What price has she to pay for her ransom? What power has she to break

her chains? What ability has she to provide for herself "beautiful garments," or to make her way to a place of exaltation? And true it is, that if her deliverance depended upon any thing that she has, or any thing that she could do, she might well give way to despair; for she has reduced herself to most abject destitution, and most helpless weakness. She has gained nothing by her tame submission to this degrading bondage,—nothing by the self-willed and rebellious obduracy which provoked the Lord to give her over to captivity. She has no money to offer as the price of her emancipation, and no might to effect it without the consent of her masters. But "thus saith the Lord, Ye have sold yourselves for nought, and ye shall be redeemed without money." You have got nothing from your oppressors, and nothing shall be required of you for your liberation. Nothing that you could give, nothing that you could do, could avail for this purpose. But I have undertaken for you. I myself will accomplish your emancipation. And just as I delivered you from bondage in Egypt, "with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm," and made no terms with Pharaoh, nor suffered him to exact anything from you as the price of your restoration to liberty, so will I deliver you from captivity in Babylon without the payment, on your part, of any ransom.

This promise was fully accomplished in a literal sense, when the Lord raised up Cyrus, and gave Babylon into his hands, that, as God's instrument, he might give liberty to the Jews, and not only send them forth without the exaction of any ransom price, but provide for them the means of restoring their city and their temple. Then did Jerusalem "arise" and "shake herself from

the dust" of sorrow and degradation: then did she "loose herself from the bands of her neck;" and, adorned with her "beautiful garments," she resumed, as it were, her seat upon the chair of state, as the acknowledged peer of those nations which had for a while despised and trampled upon her.

And thus it is that, by the scheme of grace, sinners are restored from a worse than Babylonish captivity. Let us consider, then, first, THE RUIN; and, secondly, THE REMEDY.

"YE HAVE SOLD YOURSELVES FOR NOUGHT."

I.—The Ruin. As a race, mankind have sold themselves into slavery. They have left the pleasant and profitable service of God, notwithstanding all the inducements and facilities which He gave them to glorify and enjoy Him. "His yoke was easy, and His burden was light." He treated them not as slaves, but as children. He glorified Himself, not at their expense, but by the advancement of their welfare and the promotion of their happiness. He withheld from them no good thing. He endowed them with all those faculties and sensibilities which qualified them for the most exquisite enjoyment; and He surrounded them with every thing that could minister to the gratification of natures thus admirably constituted. Yet from this service, so honourable and so advantageous, man broke away. He sold the immortal soul which God had given him to keep as a jewel more precious than all the gold and gems which Earth contains. He sold the body which God had so wonderfully adapted, in all its senses and

all its powers, to the spiritual nature within him, and the material nature around him. Man sold himself as a slave: and each succeeding generation of men have confirmed the miserable sale,—the sacrilegious alienation from God of that which He had consecrated to himself, and stamped with his own image and superscription.

And *to whom* is it that men have thus sold themselves? It is to Satan, the wily tempter, the father of lies, the betrayer and murderer, the enemy of God, and the insidious foe of mankind. They have listened to his flatteries; they have hearkened to his false and delusive promises; they have suffered themselves to be led captive at his will.

For what *purpose*, we further ask, is it that men have sold themselves? What is the nature of that service to which they have devoted their energies? They have "sold themselves to work evil in the sight of the Lord." They have given their soul and body into the hands of Satan, to do his will and to work his work. They have sold themselves to forge chains wherewith he may more effectually bind them; to build "strongholds" in which he may keep and imprison them; to fashion weapons with which he may assail those who come to their rescue, and strive to effect their liberation. They have become the bondslaves of sin, and have "yielded their members servants to uncleanness, and to iniquity unto iniquity."

Is there, then, any *benefit* to be obtained in this service,—any inducement on account of which a rational creature should for a moment entertain the idea of giving himself to it? No: for, mark the wretched price for which men have sold themselves into this bondage. They have "sold themselves for nought." True it is,

that Satan made them large promises. He gilded his bait; he concealed his hook; he flattered their pride; he beguiled them by offers of fuller satisfaction to all the wants of their nature than God had provided for them. He incited them to break through the bounds which God had set around them, and to expatiate at large in fancied freedom. He said, "Ye shall be as gods," independent, and above control. But, promising them liberty, he made them slaves of corruption. Promising them wisdom and knowledge, he darkened their minds, and blinded their understandings, and befooled them with lying vanities and hollow delusions. Promising them riches, he sunk them into utter destitution, —he impoverished and ruined them for eternity. Promising them honour, he plunged them into the slough of degradation, and dragged them through the mire of pollution, along the road that leads "to shame and everlasting contempt." Promising them gratification, he gave them nothing but disappointment and mockery: and the fruit which he held out to allure them, all bright and luscious as it appeared, turned into ashes in their mouths, like the apples of the Dead Sea; or yielded only gall and bitterness, like the grapes of Sodom and the clusters of Gomorrah.

Let the servants of sin testify whether they have ever received anything worthy to be valued,—worthy to be named by an immortal creature, in return for the souls which they have bartered away. What have they ever gained by sin? What true satisfaction has it ever given them? What has it done to advance their happiness,— their honour,—their welfare, either for this life or the life to come? What have vicious indulgences and fleshly

lusts done for the drunkard or the sensualist? What have oaths and Sabbath breaking done for the profane, or falsehood for the liar, or bitterness and wrath and clamour for the slaves of passion? Must not the conscience even of those who are still enthralled by sin answer that they have gained nothing;—that the temporary excitement, the degrading and transient gratification, has left nothing behind it but self-reproach and uneasiness;—that nothing remains of the sparkling and effervescing draught but noxious and bitter dregs, which must perforce be drunk, and which shall long continue to exercise their deleterious influence? Must not even the servants of sin be often constrained to say, after their wildest excesses of self-indulgence, "Alas! and is this all? Is this what is called pleasure? What has it done for us? What are we the better of it? What satisfaction has it given us?" And still more emphatic will be the testimony of those who have "escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust," when the appeal is made to them, "What fruit had ye in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?"

But not only is there no benefit to be obtained from these things: their result is *positive evil* of incalculable extent. "The end of these things is death." "Because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience." The indulgence of sin brings with it, as a necessary consequence, the curse of a broken law; and under that curse the blighted soul of the sinner pines and languishes,—cut off from every reviving, gladdening, purifying influence. Having sold himself to sin and to Satan, he is given over to reap "the wages of sin, which is death." Spiritual death reigns

in him now. Eternal death awaits him hereafter. "Living in pleasure, he is dead while he liveth." He hath severed himself from the fountain of life, and hath drunk of that poisoned cup which Satan puts into the hands of his slaves,—a cup drugged with insidious and noxious opiates, by which they are rendered insensible to all that is spiritual, and incapable of all that is holy, while sensitive and strong for all that is of Earth. "He feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?" He slumbers on the brink of perdition, and recks not of the terrible awakening which is in reserve for those who will not now hear the warning cry, "Awake, and away from this perilous position! Arise, and depart, for this is not your rest: because it is polluted, it will destroy you, even with a sore destruction."

It is not, indeed, to be expected that they who are really sunk in the sleep of spiritual death should be conscious either of their true condition, or of the doom that is impending over them. To know that we have been sleeping, demands that we should be at least in some degree awakened: and they whose slumbers are deepest are least conscious of being asleep. Nor will it be obvious to those whose judgment is formed on a superficial view of outward appearances, that they whom the Scriptures describe as being asleep are really so. For many of those to whom this description applies are far from being sunk in listless indolence, or in silent and sluggish apathy, as regards the things of sense and of time. A man locked in slumber may be restlessly tossed in a troubled dream, in which he may speak loudly and earnestly, and in which his mind may be evidently occupied

about something which he takes to be real and substantial; but which is in truth but a fleeting vision and a mocking illusion. It is not, even, a very rare occurrence for one to walk about while still sleeping, with all the air of one who is awake. I have seen a man thus rise in his sleep, and walk from room to room, speaking fluently and coherently, and gesticulating with not ungraceful energy; though all the while he was unconscious of the reality of things around him. He was living in a world of his own creation. He was pursuing phantoms,—peopling the air with beings of his own imagination, and disregarding the objects with which he was actually surrounded. And thus it is with many who are spiritually asleep in the world. They walk about on God's earth, yet they "regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hands." They speak, it may be with earnestness, on many subjects, but in all that they say there is no reference to the most important aspect in which all things can be viewed,—no recognition of the momentous relation which the things of time bear to the things of eternity; and if ever they speak on religious matters, it is manifest, for the most part, that they "understand not either what they say, or whereof they affirm." They are active in mind and in body; but their activities have no bearing on the promotion of their own true interests,—no connection with those unseen realities which give to this present life all its deep significance, and all its incalculable importance. They are manifestly unconscious of their actual position. There is an utter incongruity between their whole course of life and their circumstances as immortal beings. They are occupied in the pursuit

of phantasms and fleeting shows, while they neglect and ignore that which is true and lasting. Their whole life is a dream—a fitful and a feverish dream,—now pleasing and joyous, now terrible and troublous: and their joys and their sorrows, their anxieties and their confidences, are all alike occasioned by that which is perishing and passing away.

But, as regards all that is spiritual, this sleep is the sleep of *death*. When the morning sun breaks in upon him who only "taketh rest in sleep," he may feel the call to banish slumber, and to come forth to the duties of the day. But in vain does it break in upon the chamber of death. In vain does the full flood of day pour in upon the pallid cheek, the closed and sightless eyes. In vain would ye throw open the dark vaults of the tomb, and carry into its gloomy recesses the blaze of many torches. The dead see not: they hear not the tread of the comer. They sleep on, unconscious and undisturbed. And the cold and stiffened corpse is not more insensible to all that is around it, than are men by nature to all the realities of the unseen world. The dead are not more untouched by all the deep love and sorrow that beam from the eyes of surrounding mourners, than is the natural man to all the unspeakable love of God in Christ Jesus. The God that is above him, and all the vast concerns of eternity, are as wholly disregarded by him as are the glorious sun, and "all the dread magnificence of heaven" by him who lies stretched in the coldness of death on the silent field of yesterday's fight. The danger of his situation is utterly unheeded by him; and, unless he be aroused by the mighty power of God, these slumbers of spiritual death must soon be

succeeded by the horrors of death eternal. He is like one who, having wandered from his homeward path amidst the drifting of a snow-storm, lays himself down amid the trackless heaps, succumbing under the torpor that creeps over his wearied frame; and who, while the tempest rages around him, grows more and more unconscious of his situation, until death and corruption seize upon their prey.

Yet for the deadness which he has thus brought upon himself, man is still responsible. This insensibility is his guilt: this callousness is his condemnation. And amid all this indifference to spiritual things, he is still a voluntary and accountable agent. While "dead in trespasses and sins," in these he "walks,"—in these he is consciously and actively engaged. He has still powers of mind and body, affections and moral susceptibilities, which, as he originally received them from the Creator, sufficed to qualify him for God's service. Therefore, to those who are thus slumbering, the call is addressed—"Awake, awake!" To those who have thus sold themselves into slavery, and who are "bound by the cords of their sins," the command is given, "loose yourselves from the bands of your neck." They who have thus fallen are exhorted to "arise." They who are thus grovelling in abject degradation are incited to "shake themselves from the dust."

But how shall they whose sleep is the sleep of death awake? How shall they who are so inveterately enslaved to sin cast off its bonds? How shall they who have fallen so low arise? How shall they whose condition is so degraded and so desperate shake themselves from the dust? What ability have they to arouse them-

selves from their fatal torpor, or to raise themselves from their prostrate abasement? What price have they to pay for their ransom, or what power to burst their chains? "Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, and the lawful captive delivered? Yes, saith the Lord, even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered." "Ye have sold yourselves for nought, and

YE SHALL BE REDEEMED WITHOUT MONEY."

II.—The Remedy.

1.—The Redemption.

BETWEEN the manner of man's fall and the method in which deliverance is provided for him there is a marked *correspondence.* The restoration is the counterpart of the ruin. But there is also, in some respects, an important *contrast* between the process of destruction and that of recovery. In his *fall*, man came first under the power of sin; and then, as a necessary consequence, he was subjected to its penalty; but in his *rising again*, the order is reversed. The curse of the law is first removed; and then, as the result of this deliverance, he is set free from the dominion of sin. First, he is redeemed from condemnation,—redeemed by *price*, but not "with money,"—not with anything which earth could supply, or which he himself could pay,—"not with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot;" and then the bondage of sin and of Satan, to which he had surrendered himself, and to which he had been judicially given over, is abolished and brought to

an end. He is now redeemed by *power*,—redeemed, not with money, but with might, from the service of those masters to whom he had "sold himself for nought," and who can plead no claim to rule over him which is not cancelled and annulled by the blood of Christ. No compensation is made to them for the loss of his services. No reservation is permitted to them of any "superiority" or title to feudal homage. No compromise or compact is made with them. The liberation is absolute and unconditional: for "a stronger than they has come upon them,"—one who will make no terms with them, nor listen to any of their pleas or remonstrances. With a great price He has purchased the freedom of his covenant people in the proper quarter,—from the Law, which held them in rightful custody, and which "had dominion over them as long as they lived;" but which acknowledges that they are dead to its condemning power through the death of their substitute and surety. And now "Sin shall not have dominion over them, for they are not under the law, but under grace." Satan, though he claims to be the Prince of this world, shall not be permitted to exact from them any "toll, tribute, or custom," while they pass through the territory over which he has usurped control. They owe nothing to sin; they are under no obligations to Satan. But rather, on the contrary, are they called, as long as they live, to cherish a holy "indignation," an insatiable "revenge," against these old oppressors, and to wage against them a war of extermination. "The acceptable year of the Lord" is "the day of vengeance of our God," —the day of vengeance against the spiritual adversaries of his people,—a vengeance, in the execution of which his freedmen are themselves to take part.

Such, then, is the process by which Christ delivers His covenant people from condemnation and corruption. First He "redeems them from the *curse* of the law, being made a curse for them; "then He pours down upon them "the *blessing*, even life for evermore." First He endures "the chastisement of their peace," and dies for them that they may live; then, bursting the bands of death, because it was not possible that He should be holden of them, He "ascends up on high; He leads captivity captive; He receives gifts for men, even for the rebellious, that God the Lord may dwell among them." First He sheds *for* them His blood on earth; and then He sheds forth *on* them the Spirit from on high. First He seals the covenant by His blood; and then "by the blood of the covenant He sends forth the prisoners out of the pit in which there is no water." First He rolls away the great stone of condemnation which the law had placed at the door of the sepulchre, in which His covenant people were by nature entombed; then He utters the loud call—"Awake! and sing, ye that dwell in the dust!" "Awake! thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light!" and with the summons He sends forth the Spirit to rouse and to raise the sleepers,—to render them conscious at once of the ruin in which they were involved, and of the remedy provided for them.

Such is the divine order—the order in which alone deliverance could be wrought for the lost from the bondage of sin and death. And, surely, in this respect, the covenant is well ordered! Surely it is a wise and a merciful arrangement that, before sinners are awakened and called to arise, a door should be opened for them

through which they may flee forth from bondage, and "escape the corruption that is in the world through lust." Surely it is well that ere the dead are raised the stone that lies on the front of the cave should be taken away. How frightful were the position of one who, starting into life amid the gloom and the rank odours and the chilling damps of the charnel-house, with "a horror of great darkness" around him, and the solid rock encompassing him about, should be left to writhe and struggle in the entanglement of those grave-clothes that swathe and bind him; and to dash himself, in frantic despair, against the immoveable barrier that hinders his egress into light and liberty. But how joyous and how blessed is the condition of him who, awaking to consciousness after the sleep of death, finds his bonds falling from off him—and the light of heaven streaming in upon him through the opened doorway of his tomb; and the angel of the Lord ready to lead him forth; and a risen Saviour waiting to embrace him, and to rejoice over him, as one who "was dead and is alive again, who was lost and is found."

Thus it is that Christ, in virtue of the ransom which He has paid, and the "power which is given Him over all flesh," "quickeneth whom He will," and "giveth eternal life to as many as the Father hath given Him." "From Heaven He has beheld the earth to hear the groaning of the prisoners, and to deliver them that were appointed to death." From Heaven He has come down to earth to purchase for them liberty, to bestow upon them life, and to lead them forth into a large and wealthy place. Thus He speaks, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed

me to preach good tidings unto the meek—He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison door to them that are bound, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion; to give unto them the oil of joy for mourning, and the garments of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified."

In this proclamation there is a manifest allusion to the sound of those silver trumpets which, on the evening of the day of atonement, proclaimed the joyful advent of the fiftieth year, the year of jubilee—that year which God consecrated to himself as one long Sabbath, acceptable to him;—that year so acceptable to the poor, as bringing the restoration of their forfeited heritages;—that year so joyful to those who, through long endurance of privation and hardship, had become broken-hearted, but who were now reinstated in those possessions which, by improvidence and waywardness, they had lost;—that year so acceptable and so joyous to those who, in abject poverty, had been fain to give themselves unto bondage for the payment of their debts and the obtainment of a living, or who had been sold into servitude by their creditors,—so joyful to them because it brought them release from their bonds, and the means of living in comfort and independence.

It was *after* the significant rites of the day of atonement had been finished that this "acceptable year," this year of jubilee, was proclaimed. It was after the High

Priest had slain the goat for a sin-offering, and having sprinkled its blood on the mercy-seat, had sent away into a land not inhabited the live goat, laden with the sins of the people; then it was that the silver trumpets announced the year of release, the year of rest and restitution, when debts were to be cancelled, and inheritances restored, and bondmen set free; and when all who acknowledged God as their Lord were to repose in tranquillity under His shadow; fed by His free and exuberant bounty, without the labour of their own hands; trusting implicitly in His care, and freely absolving their debtors, as they themselves were freely forgiven their greater debt to Jehovah.

Even so, it was on the ground of that great atonement which Christ, the true High Priest, came to offer for the sins of His people, that He was anointed to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, the day of salvation. It was on the ground of that satisfaction which He had undertaken to make for sin that He announced to the poor—to those who were ruined and bankrupt—the glad tidings of that remission of debts which God was willing to grant to those who could offer no compensation for the dishonour they had done to His law, and who could in nowise answer the demands of His justice, but by their endurance of His unmitigated wrath. It was on the ground of the sore travail which He bore in His own soul,—the anguish poured down upon Him by the wrath of the Father, and whereby His soul was made exceeding sorrowful, even unto death,—it was on the ground of this bitter endurance, this vicarious suffering, that He was sent "to bind up the broken-hearted,"—"to speak comfortably unto Jerusalem, and

to say to her that her warfare was accomplished, for she had received," in Him, "double for all her sins." It is on the ground of that ransom which He has paid with His own precious blood, that He preaches "deliverance to the captives,"—liberation from the bondage of the law as a relentless taskmaster, an implacable accuser, and an inflexible judge; though not from its authority as a monitor, a teacher, and a guide. It is on this ground that He proclaims deliverance from the tyranny of sin and Satan, to which men are by nature given over by the curse of God lying upon them, and to which they voluntarily submit as long as they are left to themselves. And it is on this ground that He "delivers those who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject unto bondage." It is because of the griefs which He bore, and the pangs which He suffered that He is able "to comfort all that mourn." It is because of His endurance of the sufferings appointed to Him, as the surety of His people, that He is able to appoint to them that mourn in Zion,—that mourn after a godly sort,—all the consolations which they severally require. It is because His own face was "so marred more than any man's," that He is able to give "beauty for ashes." It is because He suffered the vials of God's wrath to be poured out upon His own head, that He is able to anoint the head of His people with "the oil of joy;" and to make the face that was disfigured with weeping to shine with gladness. It is because He took on Him the lowly garb of suffering humanity, that He is able to clothe His people with the beautiful garments of praise and of salvation. It is because He endured those agonies of spirit, under which He was "sore amazed and very heavy,"

that He is able to divest His people of the "spirit of heaviness," and to fill their mouths with exulting and jubilant melody.

Such is the proclamation which Christ is anointed to make; and such are the grounds on which He is enabled to make it in perfect consistency with God's justice. It is a full and a free deliverance that is offered to all. It needs not that we should shew any title in ourselves to this liberation. It needs not that we should render satisfaction to divine justice by any sufferings or services of ours. For this end the sufferings of Christ are completely and exclusively sufficient. It needs not that we should shew any fitness in ourselves for rightly using our liberty;—that fitness is willingly and freely given by Christ to all who seek it. It needs not that, by any works of ours, we should secure the continuance of God's favour; or that, by any efforts of ours, we should procure nourishment and health for our souls. As, in the year of jubilee, the Israelites were called to rest from labour, and to subsist on the produce of the land, miraculously multiplied on a former year, so as to be sufficient for three years' supply; so are they who are made free by the Son of God called to rest from their own works as a ground of confidence toward God. They are called to abandon all efforts in their own strength and their own wisdom for the securing of their soul's welfare; and to trust entirely to that which is laid up for them in Christ,—to that righteousness which is given them in Him, and to that spiritual provision which He has made for them. But of that provision they must diligently and fully avail themselves; and if they really feel that they have been forgiven so much,

they cannot but love much, and in love obey Him who has given Himself as a ransom for them: if they feel that such debts have been remitted to them, they cannot but be ready to forgive others also their debts.

Thus, then, it is that, by the *work* of the Lord, complete restoration is provided for the lost; and thus it is that, by the *word* of the Lord, the great redemption is proclaimed. In virtue of the ransom which God hath found out, the claims of the law are satisfied; the claims of sin and Satan are annulled and disallowed; and they to whom this salvation is made known are called to "awake" from carnal security and death-like torpor: they are called to come forth from captivity, to "loose themselves from the bonds" of those tyrant masters from whom Christ has come to redeem them, and whose dominion over his covenant people He has broken and subverted. They are called to lay hold on Christ as their righteousness and their strength—to clothe themselves in those garments of salvation which He hath provided for them—and to gird themselves with that strength which He is ready to impart to them. They are called to "shake themselves from the dust" of earthliness and carnality, and from the dust of shame and degradation, of despondency and guilty fear. They are called to "arise" and assume a place of honour and dignity, being "raised up together, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." They are called no more to stand in the way of sinners, or to sit in the seat of the scornful—no more to keep company with "the uncircumcised and the unclean," but to come out and be separate from the world. They are assured that, if they put their trust in God, He will not suffer "the enemy to exact upon them, nor the son of

wickedness to afflict them." And the promise is given them, that if, in the strength of the Lord, they overcome temptation, and keep themselves unspotted from the world, they shall at last appear in the upper sanctuary, clothed in white robes, and shall "sit down with Christ on His throne, even as He also overcame and is set down with His Father on His throne."

2.—The Renovation. And, by the *Spirit* of the Lord working in their hearts, Christ's covenant people are enabled to hear and to obey this call. They are awakened to an awful apprehension of the strictness of God's justice, of the spirituality of God's law, of the power of God's anger. They are convinced of sin; they are made to know the plague of their own hearts. They become sensible of their utter inability to cleanse themselves from the guilt and the pollution which they have contracted. They are aroused to a consciousness of the tremendous responsibilities that lie upon them, because of the faculties with which they have been endowed, and the opportunities of knowing God which have been bestowed upon them. Yet they feel that they cannot, by any strength of their own, acquit themselves of these responsibilities;—they cannot discharge the duties to which they are called; they cannot resist the temptations which beset them; they cannot overcome the spiritual enemies that compass them about, or the insidious foes that lurk in their own bosoms. They feel that their very will is by nature enslaved; that their "soul cleaveth to the dust;" that their affections ever tend to cling around the things that are on Earth, instead of rising to the things that are above. They become conscious of the vast capacity

of their souls for bliss or for woe; and they are humbled and amazed to think of the infatuation in which they had so long lived for time, and been engrossed with the things of sense, to the neglect of those things unseen and eternal, which can alone fill and satisfy the soul. Nor even now do they feel that they are able, by any effort of their own, to break loose from the entanglements of earth and the snares of sin.

Thus, while conscious of their wants, their responsibilities, and obligations, they become conscious also of their emptiness and destitution,—of their impotence to acquire that which they need, or to do that which is demanded of them. And while they abandon all trust in themselves, they renounce also, in the most comprehensive sense, all creature confidences. They know that neither man nor angels could work out for them a righteousness in which they could stand before God. They know that no created intellect could devise for them a plea that they could urge for their justification before Him with whom they have to do. They know that "no man can give a ransom for his brother; for the redemption of the soul is precious,"—all the wealth of a universe could not purchase it,—all the labours of unnumbered creatures could not accomplish it. They know that the world cannot give them peace, or fill the void of their capacious and immortal souls. They know that the pleasures of sin are alike debasing and unsatisfying,—that the pomps and luxuries, the gauds and shows by which the Prince of this world dazzles his dupes are but brilliant cheats, like the mirage of the desert, that fleets and fades as the pursuer advances.

But it is not by the mere feeling of the emptiness of these resources that they are led to renounce them. It

is not by mere disgust with the world that they are induced to separate themselves from it. It is not by mere weariness in their efforts to establish for themselves a righteousness that they are constrained to give up the attempt. It is not by mere disappointment with the results of human wisdom that they are led to abandon all trust in its devices. Nor is it by the mere compunction of an awakened conscience,—the mere feeling of self-degradation,—the mere loathing of their moral nature towards the low pursuits of vice, and the deceitful pleasures of sin, that they are led to renounce these pernicious indulgences. It is by the discovery of a higher and purer source of satisfaction. It is by the attraction of a brighter and more glorious object than the world can present. It is by the contemplation of a wisdom and a righteousness,—a strength and a sufficiency, which they cannot find in themselves, and which no creature can provide for them. It is thus that they are drawn,—it is thus alone that they *can* be effectually drawn, from all delusive hopes and refuges of lies, and made to trust in the living God. It is thus that they are weaned from Earth and won for Heaven. It is by the apprehension and appropriation of these divine gifts, through the influence of the regenerating Spirit, that they are delivered from bondage, and brought into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

In their natural state,—and even perhaps when first awakened,—working, and working in vain, for the payment of a debt that could never thus be cancelled;—hampered and borne down by the weight of those chains which they dragged wherever they went, they could not render, with cheerfulness or alacrity, even an external obedience to God's laws and ordinances: and no marvel

that they wearied of that drudgery, to which the lash of the law and the terrors of coming judgment urged them painfully and reluctantly on. No marvel that they counted it a grievous burden, and were ever ready to give it up in despair, hating God, and that which they falsely regarded as the service which He required. But now, being rescued from the curse under which their souls languished, they are delivered from the frown that repelled them from God's presence, and lightened of those guilty fears which kept them at a distance from Him. By the blood of Christ "their consciences are purged from dead works to serve the living God." They are "truly the Lord's servants," because He "hath loosed their bonds." They are admitted into communion with the Father of their spirits, and they serve Him in the spirit of adoption. They are united to the source of life, from which a stream of quickening and strengthening influence pours into their souls. They "run" with alacrity in "the way of God's commandments," because "He hath enlarged their heart,"—He hath set them free from the galling and crushing bondage under which they groaned. Their spirits dilate and glow under the genial beams of the Sun of Righteousness. They "walk in the light of the Lord." They are "joyful in their King," and give themselves to the promotion of His cause with a loyal and lively interest. Thus the service of the Lord becomes not only their *possible*, but their *necessary*—their chosen employment,—necessarily chosen and pursued, because "the love of Christ constraineth them,"—it bears them away from sense and self and sin;—it bears them on to duty and to devotion,—to the doing and the daring of whatever can glorify Him who gave Himself for them.

The Plague of the Heart.

"The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint."—Isaiah i. 5.

Look on the ghastly scene which spreads below—
A scene of death, of sickness, and of woe;
A lazar-house, with restless couches spread—
A multitude of dying and of dead!

Still rise the sounds of mourning and complaint,
For "the whole head is sick, the whole heart faint;"
And, sadder still than sounds of grief can be—
The feverish ravings of delirious glee!

Unheeded stands the kind Physician by:
To Him they never raise the imploring eye;
But call on Death, in dread and dark despair,
Or speak to phantom-shapes, and grasp the air.

O blest Physician! turn not thou away,
Though for thine aid no voice be heard to pray.
O thou who, if thou wilt, canst make them whole!
Speak thou the word to every dying soul.

Bind thou the wounds no mortal hands can heal;
Make each insensate spirit know and feel
His own heart's plague, that he may seek for aid
From Thee, on whom our sorrows all were laid.

The Waters of Shiloah.

"Forasmuch as this people refuseth the waters of Shiloah that go softly . . . . now therefore, behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river, strong and many."—Isaiah viii. 6, 7.

Ye who Shiloah's gentle stream despise,
That softly flows from Zion's holy hill,—
Who slight those living waters that arise
In God's own holy mount, and, calm and still,
Pour on with tranquil windings and glad sound,
Diffusing peace and sweet refreshment round,
'Mid those green pastures and luxuriant meads
Where his thrice happy flock the heav'nly Shepherd leads;

Ye who desert these peaceful streams, and love
The turbid floods that hoarse and furious roll—
Whose restless spirits still will seek to rove
'Mid scenes congenial to th' unquiet soul;—
Prepare to see these rushing waters swell,
And sweep the fields where ye have loved to dwell;
Prepare to see your treasure swept away;—
Prepare to be o'erwhelmed, or turn while yet you may;

Ye who despise the still small voice of God,
Whose deep, calm whisper calls you to return,
Prepare to feel His dread avenging rod;—
Prepare to see His kindling anger burn!
Ye who neglect the Gospel's voice of peace,
Know that these calls of mercy soon shall cease;
And ye, whose trust is in the Law, shall hear
The Law's dread thunders burst on your despairing ear!

PART II.

AWAKENING.

"Awake, awake!"—Isaiah lii. 1.

THE entire passage on which our meditations are founded has an important application, as we have found, to the case of each individual sinner. It indicates the manner in which they to whom the redemption that is in Christ is made known, are called to avail themselves of the provision made by the Redeemer for their deliverance from sin, and from all its consequences. The three verses, taken together, may be regarded as containing a summary of Christian privileges and duties. They are the voice of the gospel, declaring to each one of us personally the way of salvation; and announcing both what God is ready to do for us, and what He requires and encourages us to do, that we may partake in His favour, and may be prepared for His glory.

But the words of the Prophet,—especially the first two verses,—are even more directly and obviously applicable to the visible Church as a body,—a body whose spiritual health and vigour is of incalculable importance, not only for her own sake, but for the sake of the world around;—not only as necessary for her own inward comfort, but as affecting her fitness to "be fruitful, and multiply and replenish the earth, and subdue it." And

in this view these words have a peculiar interest for us at the present time, when the awakening and revival of Churches in other lands calls upon us to awake, and to lay hold on divine strength; that we may walk at liberty, purified and invigorated,—rejoicing and triumphing in Christ Jesus.

Let us then attend, first, to the calls here addressed to the Church; and then to the promises made to her.

There is in these verses a call made to the Church, in a series of stirring exhortations and appeals, to which we shall advert in such an order as seems best to coincide with the successive steps in the process of revival. Meanwhile let us fix our attention on this call—

"AWAKE, AWAKE, O ZION!"

Too often the Church falls into a state of slumber,—into a dull, apathetic, and listless condition. This may be the case, in various circumstances, and may arise from various causes.

Sources and Symptoms of Slumber.

SOMETIMES the Church may fall into such a state of lethargy after a period of great activity and strenuous conflict. *Times of excitement and exertion may be followed by a relapse into self-satisfied repose and inaction.* The Church may rest upon past triumphs, and make a pillow of past attainments, instead of being impelled and encouraged by these successes to further progress and more diligent effort.

Strange as it may appear, the history of the Church presents not a few instances of such reaction and partial

collapse after seasons of victorious struggle and vigorous labour. So has it often been that the Churches have lost, in times of tranquillity and rest, what they had gained in times of persecution and trial. They have too hastily laid by their armour, and relaxed their watchfulness; and the world in *midst* of them has accomplished, by its blandishments, what the world *against* them could not effect by all its terrors. They have ceased to feel their danger and their weakness; and the aids from on high, which they no longer implored as indispensible, have been withheld from them, that they might be made to prove their own helplessness and insufficiency.

But, again, the Church may fall into such a state of slumber *through the influence of discouragement and despondency.* When her hopes have been blighted, and her expectations have been baulked,—(which is ever through some error or remissness on her own part,)—she may sometimes be found, like the disciples of old, "sleeping for sorrow,"—overcome by the benumbing, enervating influence of frequent disappointment. Hope deferred may make the heart sick: and she may be tempted to abandon, or to prosecute but languidly and feebly, those labours from which she has seen so little fruit.

Or it may be that *the Church is seduced into slumber through the very absence of anything extraordinary in her history and experience.* It is said of the men of the world that "because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God." When their life glides on in an easy and unvarying course, and "seed time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night" succeed each other in their wonted rotation, without

anything to startle, to alarm, or to arouse them, they forget that this regular course of nature is ordered and sustained by Nature's God: "neither say they in their hearts, 'let us now fear the Lord our God, that giveth rain, both the former and the latter, in his season; He reserveth unto us the appointed weeks of harvest.'" And thus, too often, it is with the Church. When things go on in their usual routine, with nothing remarkable to excite attention; when congregations continue to meet, Sabbath after Sabbath, in decent solemnity, and with none to make them afraid; when a few hopeful additions are made, year by year, to the Church; when her schemes continue to receive their accustomed support, and to meet with their wonted amount of success; she is apt to forget that even for these moderate and customary results, all her machinery and all her agencies would be insufficient without the blessing of the Lord of providence and of grace. And she is prone to rest satisfied with these meager fruits, without crying mightily to God for reviving and refreshing influences, that she may "break forth on the right hand and on the left, lengthening her cords and strengthening her stakes." "Grey hairs are upon her here and there, and she knows it not." She forgets that a Church that is not advancing must be declining; and that the absence of progress is itself a mark of decrepitude and decay. She is apt to become "like a cake not turned," —to "settle on her lees,"—to "sacrifice unto her own net, and burn incense unto her own drag."

In such a state of slumber and apathy, the Church needs much to call to remembrance the admonition— "be watchful, and strengthen the things that remain,

that are ready to die; for I have not found thy works perfect before God." There is, indeed, in her "something that remains;" her members are not altogether and universally dead. They are not like dry and withered branches, fit only for burning. But the things that remain in them are "ready to die." They are in a feeble and sickly condition. They are like drooping and unhealthy plants. The sap seems to stagnate in their branches, instead of flowing freely and abundantly. Their growth is stunted and dwarfed. Instead of increasing in vigour and luxuriance, they seem to be going back and declining: and, consequently, their fruit is scanty and poor. "Their works are not *perfect* before God,"—or, more literally, are "not *filled up*:" they are like the grapes of an unhealthy vine,—lank and lean, instead of being plump and juicy: or they are like the ears of corn in Pharaoh's dream, "withered, thin, and blasted with the east wind." There is little heart in such works;—little that is real and substantial, and to the purpose. The form is not *filled up* with the spirit; and, consequently, the very form is apt to be curtailed of its due proportions, and to shrink and dwindle into a dry and useless husk. Or, though it should present a goodly appearance outwardly, it is like a shell in which the kernel has become shrivelled and shaky, and which is fit only for a rattle. However fair it may seem in the eyes of men, its hollowness is manifest before God. He sees that external service is not *filled up* with the spirit of devotion,—that outward activities are not *filled up* with true zeal for His glory, and for the welfare of His creatures. What is done in obedience to His command is done languidly, if not reluctantly. What is

given in support of His cause is given grudgingly, if not stintedly. What is uttered by the lips in celebration of His praise, in supplication for His favour, or in maintenance of His truth, is uttered formally, and comes not from the heart.

Means of Awakening.

1.—The Word.

But whatever be the causes, or whatever the symptoms of the Church's slumber, the call of God's Word to her is, "Awake! awake!" Awake from dreams of self-complacency and false security. Awake from drowsy apathy and indolent repose. Awake from the heaviness of despondency and discouragement. Awake to a sense of thy responsibilities and obligations. Awake to a consciousness of thy need, and to an appreciation of the fulness that is in Christ for the supply of all thy wants. Awake to zeal and earnestness in the accomplishment of thy heavenly mission. "Awake to righteousness, and sin not." "What meanest thou, O sleeper? Arise, and call upon thy God."

Even when the bright morning of the gospel had but newly dawned upon the world, and while it was yet glowing with its early radiance, and diffusing abroad its freshness and fragrance, there was a Church* which, after a season of awakening, had fallen again into a state of grievous torpor and declension. And in the midst of her backslidings, she indulged in the most unwarrantable self-satisfaction, buoying herself up with delusive trust in the external advantages which she enjoyed, and

* Rev. iii. 14-22.

the professions which she made, but with which her spiritual condition and attainments were very far from being conformable. Soothed by the flatteries which the Tempter had addressed to her;—pillowed on the soft couch of her own self-indulgence and boastful security; and lulled by that joyful sound, which, in her lethargy and carnality, had become to her "as a very lovely song of one who had a pleasant voice, and played well upon an instrument,"—that indolent Church had fallen into a deep sleep, amidst which she revelled undisturbed in pleasing dreams of her own superiority, her own resources, her own fancied achievements.

But while she thus slumbered and slept in her perfumed chamber, the gentle strains of comfort and peace, which, in her drowsy state, had acted as a lullaby, and had chimed in with her cherished dreams, were suddenly interrupted, and exchanged for a loud knocking at her closed and fastened door. It was the Lord Jesus himself who had come to visit his sleeping bride; and His voice was heard without, proclaiming His title to an immediate admission and a grateful reception. "These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the beginning of the creation of God." The slumbering Church aroused herself to some degree of consciousness at the utterance of these words. But though she had long deemed herself not unworthy of a gracious visit from her Lord, yet a latent feeling that she was not at present in a condition in which she could satisfactorily meet with Him, combined with the sloth which had enervated her frame, and which she could not at once shake off, to prevent her from rising to open the door and welcome the heavenly Visitant.

While she hesitated, His voice proceeded,—"I know thy works." And instantly the imagination of the half-awakened Church reverted to her self-flattering dreams; and she began to say within herself, "Ah! that is a pleasing assurance:—thou, too, knowest those works whose merit I have been delighting to contemplate." Nor did the illusion altogether vanish when the sentence was completed—"I know thy works, *that thou art neither cold nor hot.*" "A happy medium!" languidly whispered the apathetic Church to herself: "I am none of those, on the one hand, who rush to the extreme of fervid enthusiasm and feverish zeal; nor of those, on the other, who sink down into the cold depths of infidelity and scepticism. I can hold my own opinion, and maintain my own creed, without troubling other people with them, or allowing them to interfere with my own ease of mind and my own temporal interests."

But how was she startled when the voice of Him in whose favour, she knew, was life, continued thus to speak—"I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." "What!" said the astonished Church within herself; "which of thy commandments have I set at nought? Which of thine ordinances have I despised or neglected? What impurity have I harboured? What idol have I not abolished? What canst thou find in me to excite thy disgust, or raise thy displeasure? What lack I yet to entitle me to thy complacent regard? Wherefore this strange rejection and condemnation of services so steadfast and a character so blameless?" The Searcher of Hearts knew the vain thoughts that lodged within her,

and He thus continued—"Because thou sayest I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see."—Thou sayest that thou art rich. Alas! it is only because thou knowest not that that which looks like gold is only glittering tinsel;—that those jewels with which thou lovest to adorn thyself are but lackered baubles, fit only to amuse the fancy of childhood or catch the eye of thoughtless and undiscerning crowds; and that those vessels which thou dost boastfully display are but "pot-sherds covered with silver dross,"—unclean and unfit for the Master's use. But, whereas none of these counterfeit treasures are capable of standing the test, but in the furnace would at once display their hollowness and worthlessness, I counsel thee to buy of me (without money and without price, for I am willing freely to bestow it on thee) gold tried in the fire;—spiritual riches which will endure to eternity;—heavenly graces that have already been tested in the furnace of persecution and temptation, and have been found by thousands, on whom they have been conferred, to be capable of standing every trial to which they can be exposed. Thou fanciest thyself to be clothed with fair apparel, wherein thou mayest appear without shame in the presence of the King. Alas! it is only because thine eyes are dim,—because self-sufficiency hath blinded thee, and thou knowest not that thou art naked before the eyes of Him

with whom thou hast to do. Therefore, I counsel thee to buy of me the white raiment of a divine righteousness, that the shame of thy nakedness may not appear in the sight of the Holy One. I counsel thee to anoint thine eyes with the eye-salve which my Spirit can bestow on thee; that so thou mayest see thyself in thy pollution, —mayst see the King in His beauty,—and while, by the contrast, thou art more deeply impressed with thine own deformity and impurity, mayest yet behold His hand stretched out to bestow on thee the best robe, and mayest contemplate the richness of that provision, and the splendour of those garments which He hath purchased for thee.

The awakening Church listened with wonder to this faithful, but unexpected, declaration of her condition in the sight of her Lord: yet, filled with shame and consternation she dared not arise to open the door and meet the direct gaze of Him "whose eyes are as a flame of fire." But while her heart was sinking within her, and fear was taking hold on her, the same voice which had been speaking in the severe tones of reproof and admonition, was heard saying, in encouraging, yet decided accents, "As many as I love I rebuke and chasten, be zealous therefore and repent,"—Think not that it is because I have grown cool in my affection for thee, or in my desire for thy welfare, that I address to thee these words of reproach and remonstrance. It is because I love thee, all unworthy as thou art, that I thus unreservedly declare to thee all thy destitution, and exhort thee to betake thyself to the one source of spiritual riches, and everlasting consolation. Arouse thee, then; "put away the evil of thy doings from before mine eyes;

wash thee; make thee clean," that thou mayest be prepared worthily to hold fellowship with Him who hath so loved thee, and hath so tenderly and bountifully dealt with thee.

"But, alas!" thought the now sorrowing and downcast Church, "if it be for the purpose of rebuke and chastening that thou art now come; then whatever be thy love toward me, and whatever the kindness of thine intentions for the future, when by long and earnest strivings after amendment I have prepared myself for thy reception; for the *present* at least I cannot hope that thou shouldst enter an abode so polluted, and hold converse with one so unfaithful and so unprepared to enjoy communion with thee." But her compassionate Lord knew what was in her heart; and, with earnest and gracious voice, He spoke yet further, saying, "Behold I stand at the door and knock: If any man hear my voice, and open the door I will come in to him, and sup with him and he with me."—However unworthy,—however hitherto remiss and apathetic, yet if thou, even thou, at least in this thy day wilt know the things that belong to thy peace, wilt open the door to receive me, I will come in and dwell with thee, and manifest myself to thee: I will fit thee for holding intercourse with me; I will supply all thy need and will rejoice over thee with singing. Yea if but one of thy children,—one of thy little ones, will bid me welcome and open the door, with such will I come in and sup, bringing with me convenient food,—food sufficient for all, yet not denied to a solitary one, should one alone among the many be found sincerely to desire it. Ay! and not only will I come in now to thine earthly abode, and sit with those who love me, and call

them to sit with me and to partake of my joy; but to him who, strengthened by the food which I shall give him, and protected by my care, shall persevere to the end, and "overcome" in the warfare to which he shall be called, "I will grant to sit with me on my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father on his throne."

Such were the words, at once of faithful warning and of precious assurance and comfort, which the holy yet compassionate Jesus addressed to the Laodicean church. But not for the sake of that church alone were these words spoken. On the contrary all who name the name of Christ—are solemnly charged to lay them to heart. "He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches."

Thus then, and with many other words, does the Lord still testify and exhort, calling upon every Church that has been invaded by the spirit of slumber, and has "left her first love," to awake,—to "remember from whence she is fallen, and repent, and do the first works," lest he "come unto her quickly and remove her candlestick out of its place, except she repent."

2.—Providence. But, further, the Lord often seconds the warning calls of His *Word*, by the startling visitations and interpositions of His *Providence* in the world. Thus has He recently done by the loud tocsin of war, and by the crash and overthrow of those earthly schemes and prospects in which men toiled and trusted for temporal aggrandizement. The Lord has been, "overturning, overturning, overturning," that the hearts of men might be humbled, and prepared to submit to Him "whose right it is" to reign supreme.

War, with its brazen throat, its clash of arms, and its clangour of trumpets; and commercial disaster, with its wild and dismal alarum—with the wail of the beggared and the broken-hearted, the distracted and the desolate among its melancholy train,—these together have sung a terrible and startling *reveillé* to a sleeping world and a slumbering Church. These stern monitors have been loudly calling upon us to renounce every creature trust,—to "set our affections on the things that are above,"—to "lay up for ourselves treasures in Heaven,"—to "wait only upon God" as those whose "expectation is from *Him*." For how vain and delusive have we found all expectations from *man*? Where fidelity and attachment were expected, fiendish malignity and blood-thirsty rage have burst forth, spreading misery and confusion over those Eastern dominions where the sway of our Sovereign seemed to be firmly established; and where, notwithstanding many defects and errors, it exerted in many important respects a wholesome and beneficial influence. Where probity and prudence were expected, frauds and follies on a gigantic scale have been discovered in the transactions of men highly esteemed in in the world, and even (in some cases) in the visible Church. Where streams of wealth were expected to flow forth, and a prosperous and profitable commerce was expected to be maintained, on a sudden we have seen the channels blocked, and the streams ceasing to flow, and the hearts of many made sick by hope deferred, while they waited for those supplies and succours on which they had calculated for the successful prosecution of their enterprizes and avocations. From the East and from the West heavy tidings have been borne. Alike

the political and the commercial world have been convulsed. Disappointment has been the lot of all whose expectations have been based on human probabilities and promises: and a voice has been heard resounding over the earth—"Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils, for wherein is he to be accounted of?" "Cursed is he whose trust is in man, who maketh flesh his arm."

These recent events are fitted to awaken us to a sense of man's impotence to secure for himself either a biding *peace* or true *prosperity;* and they add emphatic significance to the prayer for the Church, "Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces."

We have seen how uncertain are all expectations, even of *outward peace*, which are founded on the apparent dispositions and purposes of men. Forty years of almost uninterrupted peace among the nations had led many to imagine that the light of civilization had scared away the spirit of war, like a demon of darkness. But the demon had departed, only to return with a seven-fold increase of virulence, to take more absolute possession of the house which had been "swept and garnished," but left, to so great an extent, "empty" of those principles which alone can secure permanent peace and brotherhood among men. The long pent-up wave burst forth, and seemed to rage more furiously for its temporary imprisonment. And never have the echoes of the world been startled by such deafening cannonades, —such piercing shrieks,—such loud and bitter wailings, as within the last few years have given token of War's terrific ravages;—never has the sun looked down upon scenes more horrible and revolting than during that

time have defaced the earth through the working of the War-fiend.

Surely, then, the Churches may well be awakened to the necessity of cherishing among themselves, and of promoting among the nations, that true peace which cannot be thus rudely broken,—that peace which is the gift of Christ, and which the world can neither give nor take away. This is peace too deep, too stable, too firmly established, to be disturbed by all the billows and waves of temporal calamity that can roll over it. It is the very "peace of God," and therefore it can "keep the heart" amidst the most distracting tumults and the most appalling dangers. It is a peace with God,—a peace of conscience,—a peace of mind, which will remain unshaken when "on earth there is distress of nations, the sea and the waves roaring, and men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things that are coming on the earth."

But, again, we have seen of late how delusive those expectations of temporal *prosperity* often are which men cherish on account of their relations with their fellow-men,—their commerce with other lands, and their participation in enterprises that promise to be gainful and successful. We have seen men of vast wealth and boundless credit,—mercantile houses, noted for the abundance of their resources and the extent of their dealings, hurled into bankruptcy by those very connections in which they trusted and boasted. We have seen, in our own and other lands, fortunes that had been laboriously and anxiously built up, scattered in ruins, as by the sweep of a whirlwind.

Well, then, may the Church awake, and strive to awaken a dreaming world, to seek that true prosperity which can never be thus subverted, and to lay hold on those true riches which can never be thus swept away. Well may we acknowledge the truth of the Scripture testimony, "Surely every man walketh in a vain show; surely they are disquieted in vain: he heapeth up riches and knoweth not who shall gather them." The things which men have been wont to account most substantial, because most tangible, and most cognisable by the senses, have been proved to be but of "such stuff as dreams are made of:" and as "a dream when one awaketh," so when we awake we may "despise their image;"—we may well regard with contempt the dazzling phantasmagoria that had bewitched and befooled us. For "even as when an hungry man dreameth, and behold he eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty: or as when a thirsty man dreameth, and behold he drinketh; but he awaketh, and behold he is faint, and his soul hath appetite;" so is every one that seeketh satisfaction in the things of this world. Sooner or later he *must* awake to feel the emptiness and insufficiency of these things; and surely the sooner the better, that he may not spend his *life* in the pursuit of that which, at the terrible awakening of *death*, must appear so utterly worthless. Surely "it is high time" for all "to awake," and to lay to heart these words of the Lord from Heaven, "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for the meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give unto you." "I am the bread of life: he that cometh unto Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth in Me shall never thirst." "Provide for yourselves bags

that wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not; where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. For where your treasure is there will your heart be also."

There *are* labours that shall never be lost, and efforts that shall never be baulked. There *are* treasures that do not dazzle only to deceive, and glories that do not shine only to sink in gloom. There *are* hopes that do not make ashamed,—beckoning only to betray, —fleeting and flitting, like the *ignis fatuus*, that decoys the benighted traveller into the marsh from which it has sprung. There *are* depositories that may be safely entrusted with our all, and which will never prove like "a bag with holes." There *are* streams, even in this wilderness, which are not deceitful brooks, or "waters that fail,"—which are not "consumed out of their place when it is hot,"—which do not "go to nothing and perish" when most anxiously looked for: and it is the part of "the Church in the wilderness," herself awaking to a sense of the preciousness of those streams, to point out to a distracted and bewildered world those fountains from which satisfaction may yet be found, when the things of this earth are detected and laid bare in all their treacherous hollowness.

And it is well for the men of this world that there should thus be "a messenger with them, an interpreter," when they are startled out of their dreams of earthly gratification. For there is danger in this awakening, if it be not rightly improved and followed up. There is a danger that the rousing shock may result only in their morosely rejecting all hope, or in their cleaving more tenaciously to the fragments of

their shattered confidences, as a drowning man will grasp at a straw, or cling to the tackle of the sinking vessel. "There be many who say," in a spirit of peevish despondency, "Who will shew us any good?" Many there are who, irritated by ceaseless disappointment,—disgusted with the "vanity and vexation" that is written upon all that is of earth, are ready to abandon as hopeless the pursuit after happiness and satisfaction. Just as Pilate sarcastically exclaimed, "What is Truth?" and turned away without waiting for an answer,—deeming that absolute Truth was nowhere to be found, and that all were equally deceived who claimed to be possessed of it,—so there are many who doubt the existence of any absolute Good; and who conceive that nothing remains for them but to make the best of what this world can afford;—to balance its bitters against its sweets; and to compensate themselves for its cares and troubles by as large a participation as possible in its amusements and indulgences. "Let us eat and drink," they say, "for to-morrow we die:" let us seize the fleeting pleasures of Time ere they vanish away: since there is *no* source of unmingled happiness,—no fountain of pure and permanent delight, let us drink of such streams as this desert can supply, and strive to forget, as best we may, its discomforts and annoyances.

Thus do *they* speak whose view is confined to this earthly scene, and who recognize no higher wisdom than the wisdom of this world, no higher power than fate, no surer ground of confidence than their own efforts, no purer source of satisfaction than the things of sense and of time. But the believer has learned a better lesson. He knows that the search after true happiness is *not* in

vain. His eyes have been opened to behold an unfailing fountain of joy even in this dry and thirsty land. He can say, "Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me; then shalt thou put gladness in my heart, more than in the time when their corn and their wine increased." "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the field shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." He knows that while all that is *of earth* is tainted and imperfect, perishing and passing away, there *are* "good and perfect gifts that descend from *above*, coming down from the Father of lights, in whom is *no* variableness nor shadow of turning."

When reports are rife of the bankruptcy and breaking up of gigantic establishments, which, like cedars in the forest, had spread their roots wide and deep, and which, in their overthrow, tear up the earth for many a rood, and come crashing down on the feebler trees around them; though he knows not how soon he may himself be involved in some such disaster, yet he is "not afraid of evil tidings, for his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord." When the proud edifices reared by ambition are tottering and crumbling, he is not dismayed, for his own hopes are built on a foundation that can never be shaken: their structure is, "according to the pattern shewed him in the mount" by the Heavenly Architect: their materials are too strong and too compactly builded together, to be overthrown by all the heavings of the earthquake, or all the battering of the

tempest. If the world should deprive him of all that it ever gave, he can "take joyfully the spoiling of his goods, knowing in himself that he has a better and an enduring substance." "His joy no man taketh from him." His riches are indestructibly solid and substantial, however impalpable to the eye of sense; and he has a security for their enjoyment better than all the bills and bonds, better than all the safes and strong-boxes, by which the men of this world strive to guard their possessions, and to hinder their winged and deceitful riches from flying away. He esteems the word of God as "more to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold:" for every promise of that word, when he endorses it with the hand of faith, and sets his seal to it that it is true, becomes a draft on the bank of Heaven, which will never be dishonoured, and which will obtain for him all that is needful for the prosperity and satisfaction of his soul. That God, from whom is his expectation, is ready to "supply all his need according to His own riches in glory by Christ Jesus." He has but to "open his mouth wide and God will fill it." He has but to prove God, by pleading His promises and exercising faith in Him, and the Lord will "pour down upon him a blessing till there be no room to receive it." He has but to "ask and it shall be given him." He has but to "seek and he shall find." He has but to "knock and it shall be opened to him."

Surely, then, it is to be expected that they who claim an interest in all these precious assurances, should be awakened by the convulsions that shake the earth, to look more stedfastly to Heaven, to take full measure of their lofty prerogatives, and to ply those who have

yet no part in the hopes by which *they* are cheered with the earnest invitation, "Come with us for we will do you good, for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel." Surely, it is to be expected that by their *example*, as well as by their exhortations, they should strive to induce all around them to withdraw their credit from those creature confidences which have been found so frail and tottering; and to deposit all their treasure in that Celestial Bank, whose Manager is ever faithful and ever wise, whose coffers are ever full, and where payment can never be stopped or for a moment suspended.

3.—The Spirit. But neither the Word, with all its calls and counsels, its rebukes and remonstrances, nor the visitations of Providence, with all their terrible and trenchant strokes, will be sufficient to detach men from the world, and to break up the slumbers of false security and drowsy apathy. The Spirit alone can cause the warnings of the Word to be felt, and the voice of the rod to be heard. Without His influence, reproof will only harden, and chastisement will only irritate. The stricken but unhumbled soul will be "like a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke," "withdrawing the shoulder,"—struggling, striving, and straining to get free,—rushing from side to side,—dashing on in its wild and wayward career, or standing stubborn and sullen, and "answering when it is reproved," only by "kicking against the pricks." It is only when the Spirit, by His inward and effectual working, "turns it" that it truly "shall be turned." It is only when the Lord "draws it with cords of a man, with bands of love," that it "will run after Him."

It is the Spirit alone that can awaken either the world from the sleep of death, or the Church from the sleep of dull declension. It is He alone that can arouse those who are without to "flee as doves to their windows," and join themselves not only to the Church, but to the Lord. And it is He alone who can incite the Church herself to respond to the call of the Beloved, "Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away. O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely." He alone can impart the principle of life to the dead, or give "life more abundantly" to the lethargic and languishing. He alone can "add to the Church such as shall be saved," and can add to the faith that saves the "virtue,"—the valour, the bold and manly energy, that impels and invigorates.

"Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord," shall the spiritual temple be built up. It is not the outward appliance, but the inward application that can avail for this end. It is not by that "wisdom of words" which proceeds from man, that the simple are to be made wise unto salvation,—not even by the inherent force of that "word of wisdom" which proceeds from God, but by the influence of that Spirit who, working through and with the word, imparts "the wisdom that cometh from above." It is thus that the work of the Lord is to be revived; and that, by an awakening among the community, the Church is to be enlarged and enheartened.

The Church is not really built up by the mere addition of numbers, whatever their rank or station, who

do not constitute "lively stones," and who are not vitally united to that "living Stone" who forms the "sure foundation." Such numerical increase *may* be effected "by might and by power." The attractions of outward splendour, of brilliant oratory, and of all the countless accessories by which a church may be adorned, while yet there is little life in it, and little of the beauty of holiness,—these things may draw numbers within the pale of a professing church. But it is the Spirit alone that can add living souls to the Church, and can give them a place in the "spiritual house" to which God will recognise them as entitled, and which they are really fitted to occupy. It is His office to detach the stones from the rough quarry of corrupt humanity,—to prepare and polish them after the similitude of a palace, and to fit them together, and compact them by the strong cement of mutual love and common faith. It is He who can bring down the "great mountain" of an unbelieving and obdurate world; yea, and can extract from that very mountain the materials with which the Church is to be built up. It is He that can transform the worldling into a saint. It is He that can subdue the stout-hearted and humble the proud; "casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

Such a work can only be wrought by the silent and secret operation of the Spirit bringing home to the heart the gladdening, yet humbling message of the Gospel. Without this, in vain are all the denunciations of sin, all the fervid appeals and warnings that can be uttered by human lips: yea, even the "might and power" of

God, as evinced in creation and in providence, will be insufficient to humble the soul; and all the strokes of affliction, all the threatenings of wrath to come, will fall powerless on the callous heart; or, at most, will produce but a transient emotion of terror,—a temporary qualm of guilty fear, which will leave the soul proud and obdurate as ever.

Let us not, then, on the one hand, be surprised when we find that rebukes and judgments fail, in so many instances, to awaken or to impress. And, on the other hand, let us not be discouraged from seeking and expecting that those warning calls and wasting calamities, which have so often proved insufficient, *in themselves*, to arouse and arrest the careless, may yet be rendered effectual for this purpose, as they have already been in many instances, by the influence of the Spirit poured down from on high.

Elijah had been complaining of the obduracy which had been shewn by Israel, and especially by the royal house, amidst the judgments with which the Lord had visited them, and the manifestation which had been given of God's glorious majesty, and of the power of His anger. To explain what appeared so incomprehensible to the prophet, and to check the despondency occasioned by such an exhibition of human depravity and insensibility, the Lord brought him forth on the craggy heights of Mount Horeb; and there caused signs and wonders to pass before him, by which he was to be taught what that was which was needful for the real conversion of the soul, and without which, even the terrors of the Lord and the inflictions of divine judgment were insufficient.

As he stood upon the mount, hallowed by such sublime and awful associations, suddenly the calm that rested around was exchanged for the wild rush of the tempest. A whirlwind burst upon the mountain, rending the ancient rocks,—howling through the dark ravines,—tossing the sands of the surrounding desert into tumultuous surges, and adding tenfold horror to the natural desolation of the scene. But, sublime and overawing as the spectacle was, it did not fill the soul of the prophet with a sense of God's nearness. He saw in these rending rocks and whirling clouds of sand no token that the Lord was with him. He heard in the roaring and ravaging blast no invitation to communion with God, no whisper of comfort or of peace. God made the winds his messengers; but, in sending them forth, He drew not near Himself. The "stormy wind fulfilled His word," but did not announce to the trembling soul His gracious presence. The "strong wind" went "before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind."

The storm passed away; but as the heavens grew calm, the earth beneath began to heave in terrific convulsions. The mountain reeled and rocked, like a vessel smitten on its broadside by an angry billow. The crags toppled and rolled from the precipitous heights, and bounded down, crashing into the valley below. Great gashes opened in the mountain's bosom, as by the stroke of an invisible sword. The rocks were cleft; and the shuddering earth yawned, and moaned, and writhed, as in torment. The prophet gazed in terror; but, while his heart trembled with the trembling hills, he could find nothing in these awful portents on which his soul could rest in satisfaction as a pledge of the divine pre-

sence,—a manifestation of that God for whom he waited. The Lord sent the earthquake as a rough pioneer, to prepare His way before Him, and make His paths straight: but as yet He himself drew not near. "After the wind came an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake."

As the groaning and heaving bosom of the earth subsided into tranquillity, the heavens again assumed an aspect of terror. The skies were wrapped in a sheet of fire, and poured down on the earth a stream of flame, that "touched the mountains and made them smoke." The dry and stunted herbs that clung to the mountain's rugged side, or grew in scattered patches round its base, gave fuel to the dancing flame; and the conflagration spread all around, scorching and scathing every green thing that had relieved the general gloom and dreariness of the scene. The prophet stood bewildered and dazzled by the vivid splendours that flashed around him,—awe-struck and amazed at the terrible sweep of the fiery scourge. But still there was nothing here to indicate that God Himself was verily present;—nothing that could suffice either to subdue the soul in profound abasement, or to draw it, in humble confidence, to the arms of the Father of spirits. The Lord made the flaming fire his minister; but, while sending forth that swift-winged herald to make ready for His approach, He himself tarried behind. "After the earthquake came a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire."

The flames were quenched; the skies resumed again their soft and tranquil blue. A solemn silence sunk down upon the earth, and spread through the calm and peaceful heavens: and while the prophet hailed this

grateful respite from agitating alarms, and almost feared that this sweet repose might be broken upon by some new and startling prodigy, his listening ear was greeted by "a still, small voice"—a voice of tenderness and love: and he knew that it was the voice of his reconciled and pardoning God. He felt that now in truth the Lord was very near to him. Yet, while he thus rejoiced in the favouring presence of Jehovah, he felt that it was a solemn thing to be thus admitted into the secret place of the Most High, and to hear the voice of the Holy One speaking to his inmost soul. That lowly reverence and self-abasement which had not been wrought by the strong and rending wind, by the heaving earthquake, or the bickering fires, took possession of his soul as he listened, amidst the hush of nature, to the still, small voice of a gracious and merciful Father; and "when he heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle," as the angels cover their faces and their feet with their wings in the presence of Jehovah.

Thus was Elijah taught to count it no strange thing that all his stern denunciations of the sins of Israel,—all the judgments which at his word had been inflicted upon them,—all the signs and wonders which he had wrought in their sight, had proved ineffectual to melt or to subdue their obdurate natures.

His vehement reproofs had burst upon the stony hearts of Israel like the rending wind upon the rocks of Horeb; but, though shaken and terrified, they had not been humbled or convinced. The arm of the Lord was not revealed to them. They had not recognised the voice of God in the sound of that rushing mighty wind.

The judgments that had come upon them, "according to Elijah's word," had agitated and alarmed the land, like the convulsions of the earthquake; but they had not been thus moved to "acquaint themselves with God that they might be at peace." They had not been drawn towards the Almighty by the shaking and tottering of earthly supports. The Lord had not been made known to them in the earthquake.

The answer by fire which Jehovah had given to His servant's appeal, and the destruction inflicted on the prophets of Baal, had come down in the midst of Israel like the flames that illumined and scathed the rugged sides of Horeb; and it seemed as if, in some degree, conviction had been darted into their minds, as well as terror into their souls. But still the flames that scorched had not melted their hearts. The lightning which flashed for a moment into their darkened spirits had died away, and left them still in gloomy alienation from the God whom they professed to acknowledge. The Lord had not been effectually revealed to them in the fire.

Must they then be given over as hopelessly lost? When all these expedients have failed, is there nothing else that can avail for their reclamation to God? Is the prophet justified in yielding to despondency, and giving up the case of Israel as desperate? No: his own experience can now testify that there is something more powerful to subdue and to soften the heart than all the keen blasts of reproof,—all the earthquakes of judgment,—all the fires of wrath; and that is the still, small voice of love and mercy; the gentle whisper of peace; the silent influence of the unseen but omnipo-

tent Spirit of God. Rebukes and afflictions may be useful, may be needful, to prepare the soul for receiving with humble gratitude the offers of pardon and the rich provisions of the covenant; but the voice of reproof and the rod of correction will not of themselves avail to change the heart. This must be the work of grace.

Grace alone can give the needed quickening, both to the formalist and to the despiser of forms,—both to the professing worshipper and to the profane worldling. Grace alone can prevent the members of the visible Church from being "conformed to the world," and can "transform them, by the renewing of their minds, that they may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." And grace alone can separate from the world, and add to the Church, those who shall be not only conformed to her practices, but transformed into the image of her Head.

Grace alone can effectually convince men of the guilt and folly either of "holding the truth in unrighteousness,"—imprisoning it and neutralising its practical influence;—or of rejecting the truth that they may practise unrighteousness without restraint or misgiving. Grace alone can humble those who are elated by spiritual pride, and elevate those who are sunk in sensual debasement. Grace alone can purify the "corrupt minds" of those who "suppose that gain is godliness," and enlighten the blinded minds of those who cannot see that "godliness is gain."

Grace alone can arouse those "that are at ease in Zion," and cause that not merely shall "the sinners in Zion be afraid"—not only shall "fearfulness surprise the hypocrites," but this fear shall lead to a true and a

fruitful repentance. And grace alone can root out the evil heart of unbelief—can dispel the irrational credulity of scepticism—can silence the cant of infidelity —and abolish the fanaticism of that worldliness which is "mad upon its idols," and intolerant of all that would interfere with its devotion to Mammon.

If, then, we would have the call—"Awake! awake!" rendered effectual, either as addressed to the Church, or as repeated by her to a slumbering and earth-bound world, we must invoke the aid of the Holy Spirit; we must cry, "Awake! O north wind, and come thou south." It is when the Spirit blows as the north wind, and breathes as the south, that the soul is truly awakened, and effectually called to come unto Christ.

First, the Spirit blows as the north wind, sharp and searching, keen and piercing. He comes to the soul to arouse it to the conviction of sin;—He sweeps away the fond delusions by which it was kept in a false and fatal peace;—He stirs up the sleeping watchman, Conscience, to "blow a trumpet," and give warning of the coming "sword,"—"the wrath of God that is revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men." Thus, when the Spirit came down at Pentecost, multitudes were pricked in their hearts and constrained to cry out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" And as the north wind blows with a force that drives away those clouds and vapours which would intercept from the earth the warm and fostering beams of the sun, (for "fair weather cometh out of the north,") so the Holy Spirit clears away those darkening mists of prejudice and error,—of carnality and earthliness, which would obscure the rays of the Sun of Righteousness, and prevent them from falling with power upon the soul.

But it is not enough that conviction be wrought, or that a clear discernment of the truth be given. The soul might be convinced of sin, and yet not weaned from it. The truth might be perceived by the intellect, yet not received by the heart. The sinner might be stripped of all excuse for his revolt and alienation from God, yet not drawn towards Him from whom he had so wantonly departed. He might be constrained to admit that he ought to love and to obey; yet the evil heart of unbelief might remain; and the light of the truth might shine like the beams of the wintry sun on the ice-bound stream, or the naked trees,—clear, yet powerless. But the Spirit of God now comes as the south wind, warm and genial; bringing refreshing showers and balmy influences. Then the spices flow out; the heart responds to the voice of love: the affections are drawn forth toward God: the awakening soul, like a flower bathed in the dews of the morning, and opening to the summer sun, expands and glows, and sends up to heaven the incense of its sweetest and richest perfume.

When life has thus been imparted, every breeze, whether from the north or from the south, brings refreshment and ministers strength. The plants become more deeply rooted by all the shaking of their branches. Their leaves and buds are more and more developed through the influence of all the fostering beams and fanning airs of heaven. The north wind of admonition and warning, the south wind of comfort and assurance, the judgments and the mercies, the severity and the goodness of God, alike contribute to their healthful growth. His faithfulness in afflicting them makes them humble and lowly. "The exceeding riches of His grace,"

shewn "in His kindness toward them through Christ Jesus," makes them flourishing and fruitful. His greatness makes them gentle, and "His gentleness makes them great."

LORD, in judgment thou hast spoken,
Oft and loud in years gone by;
And by many an awful token
Taught us that our end is nigh;--
That our life is frail and fleeting,
And this world is not our rest;
For its brightest shows are cheating,
And its joys are brief at best.

Tales of woe from distant regions,
Grief and gloom on every hand,
Ruthless deeds of rebel legions,
Ruin stalking through our land,
Golden idols round us falling,
Shrines of mammon strewn in dust;
These have all to man been calling,
"Put in God alone thy trust."

AWAKENING.

SECTION SECOND.

"Awake, awake!"—Isaiah lii. 1.

"Knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep.'—Rom. xiii. 11.

The Doing of the Lord.

Of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: Loud is the call which the Lord, by His Word, addresses to the Church and to the world to awake: strong is the enforcement which that call receives at all times, and has especially received of late, from the dispensations of God's providence: but all these instrumentalities will be insufficient without the mighty working of the Holy Spirit.

And thanks be to God that in some lands, and among some churches, the call has been thus rendered effectual. In one region where the stroke of chastisement most heavily fell, and where the deceitfulness of riches—the vanity of earthly hopes, was most signally manifested, the influence of the Spirit also has most abundantly come down, to produce susceptibility in many souls to these warnings and admonitions,—to arouse those who had been "at ease in Zion,"—to quicken those who "had a name that they lived but were dead,"—and to arrest the attention of many who

had been engrossed with the things of time to this solemn question, "What is a man profited if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" The heart of a whole people has been stirred to its depths. Multitudes have felt themselves summoned, as it were, into the Valley of Decision, to meet the Lord as their Judge: and to the question, "Who is on the Lord's side?" thousands and tens of thousands have been constrained to answer, "Lord, we are thine," "other Lords besides thee have had dominion over us; but by thee only will we make mention of thy name." The Lord has "allured" His professing Church "into the wilderness;" and there He has "spoken comfortably unto her, and has given her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope." To many the loss of earthly riches has been the occasion of their being made rich for Eternity. To many the experience and contemplation of that "vanity," which is so legibly written on all that is of earth, has been the means of awakening an earnest desire after these things which deceive not and perish not. Many who, like the African explorer,* had been ready to cry "Eureka!" as they caught the distant gleam of that which seemed to be the object of their search, have found that the seeming lake was but a glistering bed of acrid salt; and they have been taught to walk less by sight and more by faith,—to trust less to that which glitters before the eye, yet to look, at once more hopefully and more eagerly, for that which "eye hath not seen."

* See Livingstone's Travels and Researches in South Africa.

The people of God in that western land have heard the warning cry, "Arise and depart, for this is not your rest:" "Here ye have no continuing city;"—"seek," then, with more earnest expectation, "one to come." They have been aroused, first to "keep" with greater diligence "their own vineyard,"—to watch more jealously over their own hearts, and to give themselves more entirely to the Lord; and then to care for those that are without,—to "tell what great things the Lord hath done for them," and to invite others to come to Him whom they "have found" for themselves, and "of whom Moses, in the law and the prophets, did write." And many who had been absorbed in earthly concerns,—building for themselves houses on the sand,—have felt the ground trembling and giving way beneath them; and have been aroused, ere it was too late, to seek a better foundation on the eternal Rock, that their house may stand when the rain descends, and the floods come, and the winds blow and beat upon its walls.

Multitudes who had been asking only, "What shall we eat, and what shall we drink, and wherewithal shall we be clothed?" have been made to cry out, "What shall we do to be saved?" Multitudes who had been wont to weary till "the Sabbath was over, that they might sell grain and set forth wheat," have been brought not only to count the Sabbath a delight, but to embrace with eagerness every opportunity of meeting together throughout the week for prayer and praise; and room can scarcely be found for the crowds that throng to every place that is opened for the worship of God. Merchants and manufacturers leave their counting-houses and their ware-rooms, to engage in more import-

ant business than any that concerns the things of time, —to transact with God concerning the things of eternity; and to pursue a commerce with Heaven, in which they buy, without money and without price, that which is infinitely more precious and more satisfying than all the treasures and all the luxuries that earth could afford.

God has "sent a plentiful rain whereby He has confirmed His inheritance when it was weary." "The Lord has given the word, and great has been the company of those that published it," and told what God had done for their souls and spoken to their hearts. The Spirit of grace and of supplication has been poured out abundantly, even upon many who had hitherto "kept silence" before God, or had been spiritually dumb and insensible. A mighty cry has gone up from the whole land. A simultaneous rush of prayer has ascended from all its borders; and has drawn down an answer as manifest, if not as sudden and signal, as when "there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the house" where the disciples were "waiting for the promise of the Father," and when "there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them." From crowded assemblies,—from the domestic altar, and from closets consecrated to Him "who seeth in secret," the desires of the needy and the thanksgivings of the enriched and rejoicing have gone up to Heaven in one unintermitted stream,—thrilling along that electric chain in which the circle of communication can never be interrupted by any untoward accident: and the hearts of God's people in that favoured region have been knit together with those of His children in our own land, by new bonds of sympathy and mutual

interest, stronger than any electric cable that science could devise, or art could fabricate.

Thus marvellously has God been working in the West: but not there alone. In the North, in the East, and in the South, He has not been leaving Himself without a witness to the power of His grace.

In Sweden, a most interesting and remarkable awakening has appeared, and not only have many there experienced that "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty,"—a liberty of which no man could deprive them; but God has turned the hearts of princes and rulers to grant a liberty in the *profession* and *exercise* of religion, according to conscience, which, to the shame of that land as a Protestant country, had long been denied.

In our own land, where freedom of worship has for many ages been enjoyed,—but, alas! too little prized and improved,—there have been many tokens for good, —many symptoms of an awakening interest in spiritual things among the body of the people, and of a growing zeal in the Churches, for the promotion of God's work. There is "the sound of a going on the tops of the mulberry trees," calling on the soldiers of Christ to bestir themselves, and assuring them that God is ready to go out before them, to smite the Philistine hosts of error and immorality. The watchers in Carmel may discern a cloud of at least an hand's-breadth, rising out of the sea; and the prophetic ear of Faith may catch the "sound of abundance of rain." The heralds of the cross are breaking through the trammels of conventional restriction and official etiquette, and are going to the highways and hedges, and to places unconsecrated by ecclesiastical forms,—lifting up their voices "in the streets,—

crying in the chief places of concourse, in the openings of the gates;" and showing themselves ready to become "all things to all men, that they may by all means save some." And the people are, to a great extent, giving a willing compliance when invited to gather themselves together for prayer, and for the hearing of God's word, even at those hours which had been hitherto devoted too entirely to earthly pursuits and amusements.

Meanwhile there come to us, at intervals, tidings from the South and from the East, which testify that the awakening Spirit, like "the wind which bloweth whither it listeth," does not confine His operations to those lands in which the light of truth shines unobstructed.

In the continent of Europe, bleak and dreary as the scene for the most part is in a spiritual view, there are yet *oases* of beauty; and especially among the plains and the "mountain sanctuaries," that witnessed of old contendings and sufferings of the faithful, there are spots ever and anon bursting into fresh verdure, and shewing that the blood of the martyrs was not shed in vain.

From the Islands of the South Seas, we hear of the idols being in some places so "utterly abolished," that even a relic of the ancient superstition cannot be discovered; and a native, visiting our shores, finds among the curiosities of a Museum what he had never seen at home,—a specimen of the gods whom his fathers worshipped. We hear from that quarter of the wonderful transformations wrought through the instrumentality of dauntless missionaries and sailor evangelists. We hear of foul orgies and cannibal revels, horrid cruelties and abominable idolatries, exchanged for the pure and peaceful worship of the God of love.

More directly to the South, the much enduring Church of Madagascar,—deprived of its missionary pastors, and still oppressed by a cruel Jezebel, though numbering among its members the young and heroic prince—presents a cheering spectacle of stedfast endurance amidst suffering and privation. And in the African continent not a few tribes are already "stretching out their hands unto God."

In the territories over which the now waning Crescent has long shed its malignant influence, there are many, if not of the followers of Mahomet, at least of those who dwell in his tents, on whom the reviving beams of the Sun of Righteousness have been shining in purity and power. And further East, among the worshippers of fire and the votaries of Bramah and Buddh, there is a movement which, especially in Western and Southern India, promises to be fruitful of blessed and glorious results.

While thus manifesting in various lands the power of His *grace*, the Lord has also been interposing by His *Providence* in a way fitted at once to awaken the Churches among us to a feeling of their obligations, and to facilitate and further their efforts for the awakening of the nations. "By terrible things in righteousness,"—"things which we looked not for," and dared not have asked for, God has been answering us,—sending the rough ploughshare of War to break up the stubborn glebe, and to make long furrows in the indurated soil,—in preparation, we trust, for the more abundant sowing of the precious seed. And by this means, as well as by other agencies of a more peaceful, but not

less powerful nature, wonderful and unexpected changes have already been wrought.

China, assailed from without, distracted and desolated within by insurgent hosts animated with iconoclastic zeal,—has entered into negotiations by which her territory throughout its wide extent has been opened up to Christians and to the propagation of the Christian faith. The "great wall" of jealous isolation and haughty exclusiveness, that had long surrounded her, has been broken down; and many among her teeming population are shewing a willingness to receive the Scriptures, and to listen to the ambassadors of Christ,—who, indeed, are as yet all too few to reach even those who would hear them gladly.

Japan, without the same stern and humbling discipline, has also, by providential means, been induced to adopt a similar course, and to follow in the wake of China.

The exigencies of torn and bleeding India have been laid bare as they never were before. The Churches of our land have been awakened, in some degree, to a sense of their duty toward that benighted region; and we may hope that our people, as well as our statesmen, will also awake to a consciousness of their responsibilities; and will exercise, in behalf of truth and righteousness, that more direct control which has now been given them over the administration of Indian affairs.

In Turkey,—as the result in a great measure of the effectual aid granted to that land in its time of need by Christian powers,— religious liberty has, at least in legal form, been established; and by the highest authorities it has been practically conceded. In Sardinia, —partly as the cause and partly as the consequence of

alliance and association with Protestant communities, we find an enlightened and generous liberality in matters of religion on the part of the ruling powers; and a readiness, on the part of many over whom they bear sway, to avail themselves, diligently and gratefully, of the freedom thus at length acquired. In Prussia, and the other Protestant states of Germany, progress has been made in the removal of those restrictions and discouragements which had pressed upon evangelical bodies. Even in Russia, the fetters, both of civil and religious bondage, have been, to some extent, relaxing: while in other lands, where toleration has hitherto been denied, the contest for liberty is carried on with varied success.

Africa,—once the cradle of earliest civilization, and one of the nurseries of the Christian Church, but which, like its own Zambesi, after a prosperous aud promising course, had plunged down into deep darkness, and struggled through a tortuous channel,—has been emerging again into light, like her magnificent river. The light of research has been carried through her dark places. The light of awakened interest is beaming upon her. The light of Christianity has dawned upon her borders; and let us hope that ere long the light of the Gospel will shine abroad throughout her hitherto most benighted regions, and will be reflected from the rejoicing souls of her swarthy sons, as the beams of the rising sun are given back from the glad bosom of her newly discovered lakes and rivers.

Thus, by His marvellous working in Grace, and His mysterious ways in Providence, God has been seconding the call of His Word, "Awake! Awake!" He has been giving cause for the admiring exclamation "What hath

God wrought!" He has been giving occasion for the encouraging inference, What cannot the Lord do? He has been inviting us to prayer, as if He said, "What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?" He has been inciting us to ask, "Lord, what wilt thou have us to do." By what He has already done, He is reminding us of the "glorious things that are spoken of the City of God,"—of the great and precious promises which He has made concerning the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom. He is calling upon us to plead with confidence, that He may do yet greater things, for ourselves personally, for the Church, and for the world.

The Doings of Men. But while there is thus reason to "thank God and take courage," do we not also find abundant cause for grief and humiliation when we survey the condition of the nations, and even of the Lord's professing people among them? Is there not much need to cry mightly, for the awakening, convicting, converting, and reviving influences of the Holy Spirit?

The aspect of the world is still, to a great extent, one of wintry desolation. Dreary wastes of moral barrenness stretch over vast regions of our globe, embracing in their wide expanse every variety of natural climate and soil and circumstance,—from the frigid to the torrid zone,—from the bleak shores of Lapland to the teeming plains of India. Even in those lands where the processes of spiritual husbandry have been most assiduously prosecuted,—where the good seed has been most abundantly scattered, how scanty is the fruit that has been produced! how thickly is the ground still covered with

weeds and overspread with thorns and briars, that defy every effort for their extirpation,—that impede the labours of the husbandman, and repress the springing and mar the fruitfulness of the plants of righteousness! Of the wide area over which the thousand millions of our race are scattered, how small a part has ever been brought under any kind of effective culture! And even in those portions for which most has been done by the use of means, how meager and unsatisfactory has been the result!

If we look to the lands of the Heathen, how pestilential and poisonous is the moral atmosphere! how noxious the mists and exhalations with which it is charged! How rank and hideous is the growth of those gigantic falsehoods that cast their blighting shade upon the earth, and insult the heavens with their foul and flaunting exuberance!

If we look to the dominions of the Papal Antichrist, what do we see but, for the most part, a vast chaos of corruption, over which broods the darkness of mingled superstition and infidelity;—a darkness unalleviated, save by the few faint stars which the envious clouds of bigotry and despotism are striving to blot from the face of the sky? Other lights indeed there are, which men boast and rejoice in; but they are only the sparks of man's kindling, which shall soon expire, leaving those who had walked in their light to "lie down in sorrow." They are but flitting meteors,—fitful emanations of fermenting rottenness and decay,—the phosphoric gleam of putrescence,—the lurid and ill-boding burst of volcanic fires,—"wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever."

If we look to the southern portion of our own kingdom, while we find in many quarters the evidences of true and practical godliness,—while, even amidst abounding idolatries we see proofs of the Spirit's power to reserve many "thousands who have not bowed their knees unto Baal," —and while in the general condition of the country, as compared with that of continental states, we find an example of the influence which even a mangled and deficient Protestantism may exert in producing peace, prosperity, and moral decency;—yet, on the other hand, do we not see how assiduous and untiring are the efforts of Popery to regain its ascendency? Do we not find a large body of nominal Protestants (if indeed they will accept the name) led on by blind guides who are striving by every means to undermine and subvert that very Protestantism to which the country owes whatever peace and whatever purity it can boast; and to assimilate the National Church, in all but the name, to the doomed and accursed system of Popery? And do we not see to how fearful an extent the men of the world are there (though not there alone) banded together to overthrow the holiest and most blessed institutions of our religion; —to seize and appropriate to their own selfish purposes the sacred hours of Sabbath rest, and to convert the whole body of the people into a festering mass of earthliness and heathenism,—the one half being condemned to uncheered, unblessed, and ceaseless drudgery, that the other half may indulge, on God's holy day, in unhallowed revelry and sensual gratification? Do we not see that in all the great towns, and most of all in the proud metropolis, it is but a small minority of the people who pay any regard to the duties and observances

of religion; so that the great bulk of the population, especially of the labouring classes and of the poor, are living in practical heathenism, making their belly their god, and sacrificing their souls to the lusts and appetites of their animal nature. Such, at least, is the picture which recent statistics present; though we trust that the efforts of city missionaries, and the multiplication of Sabbath evening services in cathedrals and halls, may be greatly blessed for the removal of so enormous an evil.

And, again, if we look to our own highly favoured Scotland,—do we not see, amidst abounding privileges and much profession of religion, a fearful amount of immorality and ungodliness? Have we not cause to blush for the extent to which many, amidst the pure light of the gospel, abandon themselves to those "fleshly lusts which war against the soul?" Do we not see multitudes, in our towns and villages, even while invited by the church-going bell, prowling about the streets, in sullen and reckless obduracy, defiant of every attempt to draw them within hearing of "the joyful sound?" and does not the harsh din of coarse, profane, and ribbald mirth often pollute and trouble the Sabbath air, which should be calm and pure and redolent of the incense of praise, as the inner court of the temple?

Even among the members and office-bearers of our British Churches, how much lukewarmness, how much apathy and inconsistency is too often manifested! How much of diluted and perverted doctrine has been, in many quarters, disseminated among them! How much unfaithfulness has been exhibited by many of them in maintaining the claims of Christ, as King of saints, and

King of Kings,—as Head of His Church on the one hand, and as Head over all things to the Church on the other?

And can we say that all who have received the *letter* of the truth have "received the *love* of the truth," and that, by the influence of the Spirit, they have been made to "walk in the truth?" Can we say that all who have testified for the right of Christ to reign supreme in His own house, have practically acknowledged His right to reign without a rival in their own heart? Can we even say that they who have been brought into the liberty of the children of God have at all times "stood fast in that liberty wherewith Christ hath made them free," and that they who "have received Christ Jesus, the Lord, have so walked with Him, rooted and built up in Him, and established in the faith as they have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving?" Can we say that their conversation has always been as becometh the Gospel; and that they have not often, by slothfulness, by remissness, by worldliness, caused the face of God to be hidden from them, and deprived themselves of that blessing by which they might have been made a blessing to others?

While we have cause to mourn that God has been so much "a stranger in our *land*," have we not special reason to lament that in the *Churches* of our land he has been but "as a wayfaring man, who has turned aside," indeed, to visit us, but only "to tarry for a night,"—leaving us again to mourn his absence. Have we not cause to be humbled because the Lord has been among us "as a man astonied;"—"as a mighty man," indeed, who has given evidence of the great things which He

could do, and which He *would* do for us, did we not walk contrary to Him,—but yet, as "a mighty man that cannot save," because we will not put trust in Him, nor commit ourselves to Him? As, in the days of His flesh, Christ "could do no mighty work" among the people of His own country, "because of their unbelief;" so has not our faithlessness and our prayerlessness hindered Him from doing among us those mighty works for which we might have looked had we wrestled with Him and clung to Him till we obtained the blessing,—had we laid ourselves more out for the Lord's service, and yielded ourselves more implicitly to be directed and employed by Him in His own work? Though "the Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save, neither His ear heavy that it cannot hear, have not our iniquities separated between us and our God, and our sins hid His face from us that He will not hear?"

Confession. Surely, then, it becomes us, both as individuals and as members of the Church and of the nation, to adopt the confession which Jeremiah makes in the name of Israel, "Our iniquities testify against us; our backslidings are many; we have sinned against thee." "Our iniquities testify against us;"—they bring against us a charge which we cannot deny. They accuse us to our own conscience;—they accuse us to God. The "backslidings" of God's children demand of them humiliation and mourning, and call down upon them the chastening rod of their Father. The "many sins" of formalists and worldlings are clamorous for vengeance against them, except they repent; and call loudly upon them to flee from the wrath to come. And if the voice

that testifies against them be disregarded by them now, it will rise louder and more effectively when it is too late,—in that day when the throne of judgment shall be set, and the books shall be opened, and when "transgressions" now "sealed up in a bag" shall be produced in evidence against those who have neglected the timely warnings, and the gracious invitations addressed to them on earth.

And let us not attempt to excuse ourselves in our backslidings, or to silence the testimony which our iniquities bring against us, by pleading any insufficiency in the privileges bestowed on us, or the blessings placed within our reach. "O thou that art named the house of Jacob, is the Spirit of the Lord straitened? are these His doings? Do not my words do good to him that walketh uprightly?"* The *Spirit* of God is offered to all, and is sufficient for all. His *Word* does good to all who receive it in faith, and sincerely seek to conform themselves to its dictates. If, therefore, any are weak and sickly among us,—if any are destitute of spiritual health and comfort and vigour, it is only because they do not avail themselves of that which God has abundantly provided for the quickening, the revival, and the strengthening of their souls.

If there is such balm in Gilead, why is not our health recovered? What mean these unclosed wounds,—these feeble knees,—these hands that hang down?

If the Spirit of the Lord is not straitened,—if He is so all-sufficient in Himself,—so freely offered,—so abundantly given to all who seek Him; why do we not enjoy

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* Micah ii. 7.

more of His influences? Why is not His working more manifest in us? Why are we not more like temples of the Lord,—habitations of God through the Spirit? Surely it must be that the communications of the Spirit are not valued, and therefore not sought with believing earnestness and sincerity. Surely it must be that the Spirit is quenched and resisted, instead of being welcomed and cherished, honoured and invoked, as our comforter and our guide,—our tried and trusted friend.

If "the word of God does good to all that walk uprightly,"—to all who receive it with the simplicity of little children, and "in whose spirit there is no guile;" and if that word fails to do good to *our* souls; then what is the inference, but that we do not "walk uprightly;"—we do not receive the seed into the soil of "a good and honest heart;"—we do not put away the pride and the prejudice which hinder the entrance of the word;—we do not "lay aside all malice and all guile, and hypocrisies and envies, and all evil-speakings, and, as new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that we may grow thereby."

Well, then, may we "be ashamed of all our doings, whereby we have transgressed against the Lord;" well may we acknowledge that if He were to "deal with us according to our doings," He would refuse to be favourable to us any more. And, in contrasting the "doing of the Lord" with the doings of men,—in contrasting the glorious manifestations which He has been making of "the exceeding greatness of His power to them that believe," with the wretched manifestation which has been made *by* us and *around* us of a perverse "slowness of heart to believe," well may we take up the exclamation

which burst from the lips of Isaiah when he "saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up; Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts."

Supplication. Yet may we also be encouraged to adopt that *prayer* which Jeremiah couples with the *confession* to which we have already adverted; "O Lord, though our iniquities testify against us, *do thou it* for thy name's sake: for our backslidings are many; we have sinned against thee. O, the hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof in trouble, *why* shouldest thou be as a stranger in the land, and as a wayfaring man that turneth aside to tarry for a night? *Why* shouldest thou be as a man astonied, as a mighty man that cannot save? yet thou art in the midst of us, and we are called by thy name; *leave us not.*"

At the time when this prayer was uttered, the land of Judah was suffering under grievous drought and famine, which the prophet in the preceding verses laments. Yet the direct and primary object of his petition is not the removal of that temporal calamity, but the manifestation of Jehovah's presence, and the experience of His favour. For this alone he ventures explicitly to pray, satisfied that the Lord should undertake for His people and work for them as His own love should prompt. His first petition,—whatever reference it may have to temporal blessings or deliverances,—is couched in the most general terms, and indicates the most submissive deference to the will and the wisdom of Jehovah.

It is simply "O Lord, *do thou*,"*—"work thou :" "O Lord, hearken and do :" By our own doings we are undone, but by thy doing let us be restored. "Do unto us as it seemeth to thee good," for thou "doest all things well." Do as thou hast said : be it unto us according to thy word. "Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion." Let our spirits have cause to rejoice because He who is mighty hath done to us great things. Let our enemies be constrained to say, "the Lord hath done great things for them." Work, Lord ; for "it is time for thee to work." Work deliverances *for* us : work faith and patience *in* us. Make us thine own workmanship : form and fashion us as living stones in the temple, polished after the similitude of a palace, though it be by the sharp strokes of affliction. Work thou all our works in us and for us. "Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children : and let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us ; and establish thou the work of our hands upon us : yea, the work of our hands, establish thou it."

Such ought to be our petition, when humbling chastisements are laid upon ourselves, or upon our nation, to bring our sins to our remembrance, and to awaken us to righteousness. We should place ourselves unreservedly in the Lord's hands, not prescribing to him what He ought to do, especially with regard to temporal deliverances, but seeking that whatever happens to us may be manifestly His doing as our God and Father, and may be recognised by us as such.

We are not, indeed, forbidden to ask for particular

* The word "it" is supplied by the translators.

blessings, even as regards the things of this life: but whatever we seek, in reference to present affliction or prosperity, it must ever be with this reservation, "If it seemeth good in thy sight." And we are not to be astonished,—we are not to murmur or repine, if, when "concerning some thorn in the flesh we beseech the Lord thrice," He allows the affliction to continue, and says to us, "my grace is sufficient for thee; my strength is made perfect in weakness."

There is, however, one prayer which we may at all times urge with the most earnest and unreserved importunity; and that is the petition with which the prophet concludes his deprecatory supplications—"Leave us not." Withdraw not from us the manifestations of thy presence. Cast us not off. Be not a stranger to us. Hide not thy face from us. Abandon us not to the power of our spiritual adversaries. "Take not thy Holy Spirit away from us." Leave us not to our own miserable resources: for without thee we can do nothing. Without thee, of what avail were all temporal comforts, —yea, and all religious privileges? Without thee ordinances are as dry breasts,—as pools without water. Without thy presence, our souls must languish; our graces must wither; our gifts must fade; our spiritual perceptions must become clouded; our way must become perplexed and dark; our signs must become obscured; our conscience must be ever accusing us, and our corruptions ever rising up; all true joy must depart from us; life must become a weariness; death must become terrible, and to eternity we can no longer look forward with joyful hope.

Encouragements and Pleas in Prayer.

To the utterance of such fervent prayers, and such humble expostulations we may find abundant encouragment in the consideration of the character of God, of the relation which we bear to Him, of the great things which He has already done for us, and of the glory which will accrue to Him from his further and more signal interposition on our behalf.

It is "for His name's sake" that we ask Him to do these things. Our prayer is, "Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name, and deliver us and purge away our sins, for thy name's sake. Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is their God."* The *name* of Him with whom we plead,—the character in which He hath made Himself known—is "The Hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof in trouble." He hath caused us to hope in Him. He hath said "call upon me in trouble, I will deliver thee and thou shalt glorify me;" and it concerns the honour of His name that we should not be made "ashamed of our hope." He is "in the midst of us,"—manifesting Himself more brightly and gloriously than ever He did in the brilliant *shechinah* that irradiated the most holy place of the temple, and we may confidently plead that, for the enhancement of His own glory, He should shew that "the Lord our God in the midst of us is mighty; He will save; He will rejoice over us with joy; He will rest in His love; He will joy over us with singing." "We are called by His name." We have avouched Him to be the Lord our God. His name is called upon us, and we have called

* Psalm lxxix. 9, 10.

on His name. We are known as a people who have "named the name of Christ;" and though we have been slow to "depart from all iniquity,"—though we are unworthy of "that worthy name whereby we are called," yet the honour of that name is implicated in our condition; and it must be tarnished by the triumph of our spiritual adversaries. We may therefore plead with Joshua, "O Lord, what shall I say when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies? and what wilt thou do unto thy great name."

Incentives to Prayer and Effort for Revival.

And while there is such *encouragement* to pray for the revival of the Lord's work amidst us, there is surely also ample *inducement* thus to plead. The glory of God, the welfare of our own souls, the prosperity of the Church, the salvation of those who are yet sunk in the sleep of spiritual death,—all these precious objects are involved in the fulfilment of our prayers.

At all times, and in all circumstances, the advancement of God's glory ought to be our chief aim, as it is our highest end. For this, above all things, we ought to labour and pray. By this motive we should be actuated in all that we do; and by this plea we should seek to prevail in every supplication for a blessing upon our efforts.

And if we sincerely seek the promotion of God's glory, it will be our first and most earnest desire that in ourselves individually and personally He may be glorified; —that, by our own abundant participation in His grace, we may *be* to the praise of his glory in our character, and may *act* to His praise in our life.

If we sincerely pray that His name may be hallowed, we will first of all strive that our own hearts may be filled with reverence toward Him,—that we may bear much fruit to His glory, and may be purged from all that would bring dishonour upon His name, or hinder our activity in His service. If our heart goes with the prayer, "Thy kingdom come," we will seek above all things that we may ourselves be the willing and faithful subjects of His kingdom. If we pray in sincerity that "His will may be done on earth as it is in heaven," it will be by ourselves, in the first place, that we will desire that that will may be done. If we make unfeigned confession of the evil of sin, it will be the vileness of our own personal sins that we will chiefly feel and lament. If we truly desire that God would "revive His work in the midst of the years," and that, by the shining of His face upon His people, "His way may be known upon earth, His saving health among all nations," it cannot be but that we should seek first and most earnestly the revival of our own souls,—the cheering and quickening of our own hearts, by the rising upon them of the glory of the Lord, and the pouring out upon them of the Spirit from on high.

But, on the other hand, it is equally true that, if we sincerely desire that God may be glorified in us, we cannot but seek that He may be glorified in others also.

If we have tasted for ourselves that God is gracious, we cannot but long to see all around us participating in the same blessed experience. If we estimate aright the love of Christ in giving himself for sinners, and the preciousness of that offering which He hath made for sin, we cannot but earnestly pray that He may speedily

and amply "see of the travail of His soul," not in ourselves only, but in the "many" whom the spiritual "knowledge of Him" is sufficient to "justify;" and that thus He may "be satisfied." If we rightly apprehend the misery, the guilt, the pollution, from which we have been delivered by Christ, we cannot but look with deep commiseration on those who are still involved in that wretchedness, that condemnation, that corruption; we cannot but eagerly strive and pray that they may "obtain like precious faith with us," and may be brought to rejoice with us in a "common salvation." If we are loyal subjects of Christ the King, we cannot but desire that His kingdom may be everywhere established,—that His just claims may be everywhere acknowledged and conceded: we cannot but mourn over every instance of open rebellion against Him among the men of the world, and of unfaithfulness to Him among those who profess to be His people; and we cannot but rejoice in every addition that is made to the number of His true followers, and to the bounds of His acknowledged sway;—we cannot but give hearty thanks for every victory that is gained by His people over the power of temptation, and over the wiles and assaults of the great adversary.

If we love Christ and cleave to Him as our own Head, we cannot but love those who are His members; we cannot but feel a deep interest in their spiritual prosperity; we cannot but rejoice with them in their joy and sympathize with them in their sorrow. If we have felt the blessedness which there is in calm, confiding intercourse with God,—in the unclouded sunshine of His smile,—the deep whispers of His peace-speaking

word, and the soft breathing of His witnessing Spirit, it cannot be but that we should seek, not only for ourselves, but for the whole family of God, the uninterrupted enjoyment of such unspeakable bliss. If "our fellowship be truly with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ," we cannot but desire that all our brethren "may have fellowship with us" in that delightful communion. And if, on the other hand, we have felt the misery which flows to the children of God from the hiding of His countenance,—from the consciousness of His displeasure,—from afflictions unalleviated by the recognition of His faithfulness and love,—from the depressing influence of the spirit of bondage,—from the sullen alienation of unrepented backsliding,—from the failing of faith, the obscuring of hope, and the deadening of love,—from the reviving of corruption,—the shame and bitterness of subjection to enemies once triumphed over and seemingly subdued for ever; if we have felt the wretchedness which flows from such sources as these,—or if we have such spiritual perceptions and feelings as enable us to apprehend what that wretchedness must be,—we cannot but look with the deepest commiseration on those who have brought upon themselves such sorrows;—we cannot but earnestly pray that they may be revived and raised up,—that the things which remain in them, and which are ready to die, may be strengthened,—that the joy of God's salvation may be restored to them, and that the clouds which brood so heavily over them may be swept away by the breath of God's enlivening and gracious Spirit.

Lastly, if we feel that, as members of a particular Church, or as dwellers in a particular land, we have

enjoyed peculiar privileges, we cannot but be grateful on account of the numbers who have participated with us in these advantages; we cannot but be solemnised by the contemplation of the responsibilities under which so many have been laid. And, in so far as we perceive that that nation or that Church with which we are connected has come short of the obligations it has incurred,—has neglected the time of its merciful visitation,—has receded from the attainments which it had once made, and has brought upon itself the indications of God's displeasure, and the withdrawal of His gracious influences, we cannot but mourn and be deeply humbled; we cannot but feel that we are each individually called to search our own hearts, and to ask, what share we have had in those sins and backslidings which have brought down this rebuke: we cannot but feel ourselves deeply interested in the inquiry, Wherefore hath the Lord a controversy with us? What omission of duty, what practice of sin, has caused the needed and expected blessing to be withheld? What grounds of hope remain that the Lord may yet be favourable to our land, and may return and visit His vine, and the vineyard which His right hand hath planted? And surely we cannot but be stirred up to take a part in every effort, and in every supplication, by which the Lord's people are encouraged to trust that they may yet succeed in removing the causes of God's displeasure, and in drawing down the showers of reviving grace!

Thus, at *all* times, if we be indeed the people of Christ, we will feel a deep and personal concern in the advancement of God's glory; we will look and long

and pray for those influences which may bless the springing of all the plants of holiness in the "garden enclosed" of our own souls, in the "vineyard" of the Church, and in the "field of the world;" we will earnestly seek and gratefully hail the heavenly dew and sunshine that shall foster those "fruits of righteousness which are through Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God."

Special Occasions for Prayer. But there occur, in the history of the Church and of the world, special times and seasons in which there comes to us a peculiar loud and awakening call to earnestness in prayer, and in which we may be expected to realize, with more than wonted force, our community of interest with the general body of believers. There are "perilous times" and critical times, "times of refreshing" and "times of visitation," times of rebuke and trouble, times of rejoicing and triumph. There are times when, amidst the din of warfare, the shock of controversy and conflict, our "heart trembles for the ark of God." There are times when the cause of God seems to take a fresh start;—times when the "cloud" that had "tarried long upon the tabernacle," fixed and stationary, "is taken up" and moves on in its majestic path, summoning the hosts of Israel to renewed exertion and progress;—times "when the ark sets forward," amidst the shout of "Rise up, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee!" There are times of repose, when the whole congregation sit down together under the shadow of the Almighty; when the "cloud of the Lord" kindles

into lustrous glory, to give "light at eventide;" "when the ark rests" amidst the fervent invocation, "Return, O Lord, unto the many thousands of Israel;"—"Abide with us, for it is towards evening, and the day is far spent." And there are times of gladness and exultation, when the Lord's "goings are seen in the sanctuary;" when, amidst the jubilant strains rung out by "the singers and players on instruments," the ark, that had so long been removing from place to place, and had so often appeared in peril, seems to be carried up in triumph to Mount Zion, no more to depart; and when, in answer to the prayer, "Arise, O Lord, into thy rest, thou and the ark of thy strength," the Holy One of Israel replies, "This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have chosen it.

Our own Times. The present is a time in which the characteristics of these various seasons seem to be, in some degree, united. It is a time at once of conflict and of triumph;—when the powers of darkness and the hosts of the Lord, clothed in the armour of light, are mustering in new strength and coming into more open and determined collision;—when "the shout of a king" is among the armies of the living God, and there arises, on "every side of all the camp," the battle-cry which is the sure prelude of victory,—"The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!" It is a time at once for humiliation and for hope, for grief and for gladness;—a time when, on the one hand, human depravity is exhibiting itself in its darkest features, and there is cause "to sigh and to cry for the abominations that are done" around us;—a time when, on the other hand, divine grace

is manifesting itself in its richest exuberance,—when "the voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous," for "the right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly;"—when the "inhabitants of Zion cry aloud and shout, for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of them." It is a time at once of renewed activity and exertion, and of renovating comfort and repose;—a time when efforts, more or less united and more or less vigorous and successful, are everywhere made to awaken the Church from its lethargy and to arouse the world from its fatal torpor;—a time when the refreshing influences of the Spirit are coming down abundantly on the servants of the living God, to anoint the wrestlers for the struggle, and to invigorate the labourers for the work of the Lord. It is a time at once of disquiet and of peace, when, on the one hand, the nations, like a troubled sea that cannot rest, are heaving and tossing in ceaseless agitation, and when, on the other hand, many of "the *churches* have rest and are edified; and, walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, are multiplied."

Surely, then, it is a time for earnest prayer in behalf of those who are fighting the battles of the Lord, that they may "be strong and very courageous;" and in behalf of "those who oppose themselves," that "God may give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are led captive by him at his will." Surely it is a time for prayer in behalf of those who have heard the command "to the children of Israel that they should go forward," that they may "go on from strength to strength;" in behalf of those who are

inwardly refreshed and revived, that their "profiting may appear to all;" in behalf of those who are tossed and troubled, that they may be brought to know the true rest; and in behalf of those who rest and rejoice, that they may be prepared for new struggles and more diligent efforts. Surely there is much need that those Churches which have already been "awakened out of sleep" should "watch and pray lest they enter into temptation" and be seduced again into slumber: for though "the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak." Surely there is much need that those Churches which are yet but half awake—if at all aroused—should bestir themselves, and sound abroad among the nations the loud and earnest call, "Awake! Awake!"

And,—seeing that, "when the Lord shall build up Zion, He shall appear in His *glory*,"—if we believe that "He *shall* arise and have mercy on Zion,"—if we have any reason to hope that "the time to favour her, even the set time, is come,"—it is surely our interest, as well as our duty, to watch and wait as those who love His appearing,—to cease from all confidence in the flesh and to look only to the Lord. For, while "he who trusteth in man, and whose heart departeth from the Lord, shall be like the heath in desert, and shall not *see* when good cometh," it shall be with the people of God now as it was with the disciples of old, at the mount where Christ "was transfigured before them, and His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light,"—"when they are *awake*, they shall see His glory."

"AWAKE! awake from slumber!"
It is the Lord that calls:
Cast off thy care and cumber,
Thou whom the world enthralls.
Pursue no more the pleasures
That dazzle and delude;
But grasp the proffered treasures
Of true, substantial good.

Cast off the chains that bind thee—
The chains of sense and sin;
And, leaving all behind thee,
The Christian race begin.
The prize is set before thee;
Press onward to the goal,
Where everlasting glory
Shall crown the faithful soul.

Awake! O thou that sleepest
While life is in its prime!
If e'er in *bliss* thou reapest,
It must be sown in *time*.
Then rise to morning duties;
And, walking in the truth,
Be decked with holy beauties
Amidst the dew of youth.

Awake! O thou who claimest
The children's bread to share,
While, sunk in sloth, thou shamest
The holy name they bear!
A light is round thee beaming
That calls thee to arise:
Awake from idle dreaming,
Be watchful and be wise!

Awake from dull depression,
Thou trembling, anxious saint!
Hold fast thy high profession:
Hope on, and never faint.
Come forth from gloom and sadness,
To liberty and light.
Put on the robes of gladness,
And gird thyself with might.

In thoughtful hours our spirit hears
The voices of departed years:
They're gone, with all their grief and gloom,
But yet they speak, as from the tomb.

O Sin! of every woe the source!
While these sad years have held their course,
How dread the shape, how dark the hue,
In which thou oft hast burst to view!

O Death! in what appalling guise
Hast thou, beneath yon eastern skies,
Thy ruthless work of terror done
On many a young and tender one!

O false and flattering world! how vain
Have been the hopes of earthly gain
Held out to mock and to beguile
The dupes that trusted to thy smile!

From sin that thus so darkly works,
From sin that in our bosom lurks,
Cleanse us, O blessed Lord! we pray,
And wean us from each earthly stay.

PART III.

THE CHURCH'S STRENGTH.

"Put on thy strength, O Zion."—Isaiah lii. 1.
"Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus."—2 Tim. ii. 1.

SECTION FIRST.

"The grace of God in truth."—Col. i. 6.
"Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."—John i. 17.

WE have attempted to shew how needful and how loud is the awakening call addressed to us by God in His Word and in His Providence. We have dwelt upon the necessity of those influences from on high, by which alone that call can be rendered effectual. And, while confessing the wide prevalence of slumber and apathy, we have gratefully acknowledged the extent to which an awakening has already appeared among us and around us.

But it is not enough that the Church be roused and stirred up; she must also be reinvigorated and strengthened. It is not enough that she should listen to the call, "Awake, awake!" she must also comply with the exhortation, "Put on thy strength." It were wretched to awake to a sense of utter helplessness, and, looking around, to find no stay or support—no source of envigorating and sustaining influence. But it is blessed to

awake to a consciousness of want for which abundant supply is provided; and to find succour appropriate to our need, and which we only need to appropriate. "Awake, awake!" it is here said to the Church, "put on *thy strength*;"—invest thyself in that strength which is vested in thee by the gift and grant of thy Lord.

What, then, is the essence, and what are the elements of the Church's strength? Wherein does her great strength lie?

What it is not. Not in the favour of princes and potentates. This is not that strength which she is called to put on, and in which she is encouraged to place her trust. True it is that kings are called to be "nursing fathers" to the Church,—to cherish, to guard, to honour her, and to co-operate with her for the promotion of that "righteousness which exalteth a nation;" and, if they know their duty and their true interest, and give to the Church their aid in that way which is competent to them, without encroaching on the Church's independence, or usurping, in any degree, the place of the Church's Head, their support and protection may be gratefully accepted as that which is given to her, through their instrumentality, by the King of kings. That all power is of God, and ought to be consecrated to God, and used in accordance with His revealed will;—that Christ is not only the Head of the Church, but "Head over all things to the Church," and "Prince of the kings of the earth;"—these are principles which the Church is called upon to maintain, irrespectively of any bearing which they may have upon her own temporal interests: and to these principles tes-

timony may be borne, all the more effective because so manifestly disinterested, by a Church which has renounced for herself the direct support of the State, on account of the conditions attached to that support. But how rarely are the powers of this world found willing to discharge their own duty and to keep their own place! How often has the patronage of earthly potentates proved a snare and an encumbrance to the Church, instead of being a source of strength and security! How often has it been proved that the Church, instead of being dependent for its efficiency on the favour of kings and rulers, may enjoy the truest prosperity when neglected and cast off, or even when persecuted and opposed by the powers of earth!

Further, the strength of the Church does not consist in the possession of ample revenues and endowments, or in having her rulers and office-bearers invested with temporal power and influence and distinction. It does not consist in the exercise of worldly prudence and sagacity, or in the following of that course of expediency which a time-serving policy would dictate. It does not consist in the grandeur of her ceremonial, the splendour of her edifices, the learning and eloquence of her defenders,—the power and position, the wealth and the wisdom of her patrons.

What it is. It consists not in such things as these, but in things more precious and trust-worthy. In a word, it consists, not in the friendship of the world, but in the favour of God; not in the natural powers of man, but in the divine power of the Spirit; not in outward glory, but in inward grace.

The Grace of God. It is the free, rich, omnipotent grace of God that is the strength of the Church, because it is the strength of those individuals who compose it, whether their position in it be public or private; and it is only in the strength communicated to the souls of its members that the Church can be really strong. For each and all of *them*, whatever be their exigencies, strength is provided in this manifold grace. "My grace is sufficient for thee; my strength is made perfect in weakness." "God is able to make all grace abound toward you that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work." And to each and all the invitation is addressed to put on this strength,—to lay hold on it,—to avail themselves fully of it. "My son, be thou strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." Out of the fulness that is in Christ Jesus may all receive, that strengthening grace may dwell in them, corresponding to the plenitude of grace that is treasured up in Him.

It is grace,—grace in the largest and widest acceptation of the term,—grace in all its forthgoings from the bosom of God, and all its workings in the soul of man,—this it is that forms the all-sufficient and exhaustless source of the Church's strength. This it is that imparts the strength of life to them that were dead, and "increaseth strength to them who have no might." This it is that constitutes that "river which maketh glad the city of our God:" and of the waters of that river of life all are invited to take freely.

But the source of these waters is unseen. The life of the Church is a hidden life—"hid with Christ in God." With God is the fountain of that spiritual life which is

the strength of the Church; and that fountain lies in the region of the invisible. None, therefore, can apprehend or appreciate the true strength of the Church but they who are spiritually minded. And even to them there is a profound and awful mystery in the gush and flow of that celestial fountain. It is unsearchable, unfathomable, inaccessible in its lone and lofty seclusion. It is high; we cannot attain unto it. We can but wonder and adore as we gaze on the bright stream that issues from that hidden source, and as we experience in our own souls the strengthening influence that flows to us through the appointed channel of communication between Heaven and Earth.

The source of this "river of God, which is so full of water," is like that of the fertilizing Nile. We can point to the mountains from whence it flows. We can "lift up our eyes to the hills from whence cometh our aid;" but no mortal foot has ever penetrated the recesses of that lofty region amidst which these waters take their rise. No mortal eye has ever looked on their first gushing forth. Or, perhaps, the source of this glorious river, in which the *true* God does really manifest and communicate Himself to us, may be yet more fitly compared to that of the great Indian river which blind superstition adores as a god. Urging our upward way through the gorges of the Himalayan range, and lifting up our eyes to the summit of yon stupendous cliffs, we see, from a rent in their inaccessible and snow-crowned ridge, the waters of the infant Ganges burst forth, pure and sparkling and joyous. We have now seen the spot where they first emerge into view, but their actual origin is hidden from our eyes: it lies far up among those un-

trodden heights that soar to heaven in such awful majesty, and shine in such unsullied purity.

Thus, if the inquiry be made—Whence proceeds the strength of the Church? we can have no difficulty in tracing its origin, so far as is needful for practical purposes. We can point to those heavenly heights from whence flows the river of divine grace. We can point to those "manifestations of the Spirit which are given to profit withal." We can tell that "all is of God,"—that "Christ is all and in all." But we cannot scale those sublime and sacred altitudes in which the waters of the river of life take their rise. We cannot comprehend for ourselves,—we cannot unfold to others, those unsearchable counsels in which the scheme of grace had its origin, and in accordance with which it is carried out. We cannot explain the mysterious effluence and influence of the unseen Spirit. We cannot anticipate or account for, however much we may admire, those "differences of administrations" and "diversities of operations" "all which worketh that one and self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will." It is enough for us to know that the stream of all-sufficient and strengthening grace flows from an unfailing and abounding source;—that "with God is the residue of the Spirit," and that "He will give the Spirit to them that ask Him." It is enough that Christ hath promised to send to his people that Spirit "whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him, but whom they know, for He dwelleth with them and shall be in them."

And, while there are certain gifts which the free Spirit of God distributes, in His sovereignty, to parti-

cular members of the Church, to qualify them for special functions and offices, He also as surely manifests Himself in those more ordinary operations, of which the entire body, and all its members, must be the subjects, in order that the Church may be strong. In various ways He communicates to the whole of the true Church that grace which is its strength. He is the Spirit of all grace, and the gospel Church is placed directly under His administration. But it is by diverse processes and operations that He ministers grace to the Church.

I. **Grace in the Truth.** In the first place, He comes as the Spirit of Truth, the Spirit of understanding, the "Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Jesus Christ." He causes "the grace of God to appear bringing salvation." He makes the Church to "know the grace of God in [the] truth." He gives to the Church "the word of God's grace,"—"the word of the truth of the gospel:" and He continues to testify to all the members of the Church that this gospel "is the true grace of God wherein they stand."

Thus, in the power of the truth, the Church is strong,—strong both to labour and to endure. The truth is her strength at once for defence and for aggression. In the might of the truth she stands unmoved amidst the blasts of persecution and temptation; by the force of the truth she subdues her enemies and wins over her opposers. "Wisdom and knowledge are the stability" of the Church, and imbue her with the "strength of salvation." By the influence of the truth her members are individually sanctified; by the light of the truth they are cheered and guided; by the contemplation of

the truth they are refreshed and invigorated; by the utterance of the truth they edify one another,—"speaking the truth in love, they grow up in all things into Him who is the Head, even Christ;" and under "the banner given to them to display because of the truth" they go forth to the conquest of the world.

Light is not life; but without light no true life can exist, and no germ of life can expand and grow into vigorous maturity. To sit in darkness is to sit in the shadow of death. Where the light of truth is excluded, or where it feebly glimmers through the dank haze of doubt and error, there may be the fungous sprouting of flaccid and flabby romance;—there may be the rank upspringing of vain and vapid excitement;—there may be the pale and pithless shooting of sickly sentimentality,—soft, lank, and clammy: but there cannot be the healthy growth of manly piety;—there cannot be the rich fruitfulness of the vine, the erect beauty of the flourishing and productive palm, or the evergreen luxuriance of the strong and majestic cedar. Without the clear shining of the truth, the Church can neither be herself revived, nor can she be prepared to act as an instrument for the restoration of the lost and the erring. In the Church, and within the sphere of her influence, "grace and peace are multiplied through the knowledge of God and Jesus our Lord:" but "zeal that is not according to knowledge" can "work no deliverance on the earth."

1.—Revelation of the Truth. In anticipation of the work by which Christ was to purchase for His people all spiritual blessings, and in fulfilment of the covenant

made with Him by the Father, the Holy Ghost dwelt, as the Spirit of Truth, in the Church from the earliest ages. "Holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." The Spirit of Christ was in the prophets, "testifying before hand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." It was only, however, to a limited extent that the presence of the Great Enlightener was manifested before the ascension of the Redeemer. And, to evince that it was only for the sake of Christ, and through His mediation, that the Spirit was bestowed, an outpouring of His influences, more abundant and effectual than ever was granted before, was given in celebration of our Lord's triumphant entrance into the Heavenly courts, as the Captain of His people's salvation, made perfect through sufferings: and from that time forth the agency of the Spirit of Truth has been more marked and constant in the Church than ever it was during the dispensation that preceded the Saviour's advent.

"If I go not away," said Christ, "the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart I will send Him unto you." "When He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth." "When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of me; and ye also shall bear witness." And ere He was carried up into heaven, Christ renewed these assurances, saying to His disciples, "Behold I send the promise of my Father upon you; but tarry ye at Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high." Accordingly, as they watched and waited for the expected blessing, they received that baptism

of fire, by which they were to be qualified to act as "witnesses unto Christ, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth."

One essential element of the power with which they were thus endued from on high was the clear, vivid, and spiritual apprehension of the truth. The Spirit of Truth, sent in fulfilment of the promise, dwelt in those whom the Saviour had chosen as His witnesses, clearing away all the prejudices and misconceptions that had warped and darkened their minds, even during the course of His own ministry on earth,—bringing to their remembrance all that He had spoken, and leading them into a clearer understanding of the words He had uttered, of the work which He came to accomplish, and of the issues which were to flow from His exaltation to the right hand of power. That Spirit ceased not to impart to the ambassadors of Christ those gifts of supernatural illumination which were needful for the accomplishment of their mission, till the whole of that truth which they were commissioned to declare had been recorded, for the enlightenment of the ignorant, and for the edifying of the Church in all ages. And when the record had been finished, the Spirit Himself sealed and attested the volume of Scripture as His own perfect and enduring work,—a complete and sufficient revelation of the scheme of grace, to which no man might add, and from which no man might take away, without incurring divine wrath.

This we must hold as a most precious and momentous truth, and must strenuously maintain, in opposition to those who, under colour of magnifying the Spirit's

work in the direct enlightenment of the individual soul, depreciate the completeness of the Spirit's work in the inspiration of the Scriptures; and presumptuously claim His aid, and assert His authority, in their unwarranted and impious attempts to supplement, to improve, and to alter that great code of divine requirement—that great repertory of divine teaching, which He has solemnly declared to be complete in all its parts, and perfect in all its expression. In this great truth, too, we find an answer to those who would depreciate the adaptation of the Word of God as an instrument for the complete enlightenment and sanctification of all, whatever have been their past condition and character, who simply receive its announcements, and trust to its promises. If in any to whom the word is addressed it fails either to convict and convince, or to comfort and sanctify, it is not from any defect in itself, nor from its being unsuited to the nature and the wants of those who hear, whoever they may be; but it is from its being rejected and excluded from the stubborn heart and the unbelieving mind; or from its declarations being perverted and misapprehended by the diseased and capricious soul.

And this truth it is specially needful in our day to maintain, in opposition to those who, either from denying the infallible inspiration of the sacred volume, or from false views of what that inspiration implies, deem themselves at liberty to interpret the words of scripture, and "develope" its germs of truth, in any way which can bring them into conformity with their own boasted intuitions, and their own preconceived and fondly-cherished ideas. If the Scriptures, professing as they do to be inspired thoughout, can be proved not to be so,

there is no alternative but that they must be rejected as false. But if they *are* inspired, and if they announce themselves as fitted and intended for all ages alike, and for men in all circumstances and conditions, then are they to be received by all with implicit belief, and to be interpreted according to their natural sense. No man may disannul or add thereto.

We cannot here enter into the proof of their inspiration and perpetual authority, nor set forth at large their claim to absolute and universal supremacy over the minds of men. Our present object is, assuming that "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God," to point out the strength which the Church derives from the truth thus communicated to her,—the strength which she is called to "put on" for her own invigoration and defence, and to put forth for the winning of souls to Christ, and the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom.

2.—Excellencies of the Word. The weapons of the Church's warfare are not carnal, but mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strongholds. And the strength by which she is to be fitted to act as an instrument for the conversion of the world consists, to a great extent, in the power of that same truth from the spiritual apprehension of which her members individually derive the purity and beauty, the energy and decision of their character. Now, to them it is said, "Ye have purified your hearts in obeying the truth through the Spirit;—being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is grass; all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withereth,

and the flower thereof falleth away: but the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which, by the gospel, is preached unto you." The Scriptures, then, are "the word of God,"—the direct and authoritative expression of His mind. They are "incorruptible,"—not liable to change or deterioration through lapse of ages,—not subject to any decay or deterioration in their efficacy or adaptation to man's wants, whatever the circumstances in which they are used—to whatever quarter of the earth they are carried. They are the "living" word of the living God,—of Him who knows what is in man, and can speak to man's heart and conscience. "They are spirit and they are life." Theirs is no powerless, pointless, or hesitating utterance. Theirs is no uncertain sound. They "speak as having authority." Their voice is deep and loud and solemn. They summon man into the presence of the heart-searching God, and there they bid him listen to One who can tell him all that ever he did,—who knows all his secret thoughts and feelings. "The word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." With supernatural penetration it detects and exposes all the deceits which men practise upon themselves, and which they attempt to practise upon God and on their fellowmen: it enters into all the secret lurking places of sin and unbelief: it lays open all the hidden workings of the heart and the mind: it exposes every wish, inclination, and affection, however carefully concealed,—every motive and purpose, however secret and subtle, that finds a place or passage among the mysterious windings of the human soul.

And while it *reveals*, it also *rebukes*, and tends to *remove* whatever would imperil the safety of the immortal spirit. As the trumpet blast, reverberating through an Alpine pass, will, by its vibrations, detach those snowy masses which hang on the edge of the cliffs, suspended as by a thread, and which, if not thus timeously loosened from their precarious hold, might come down in a thundering avalanche to crush the unwary traveller; so does the loud and thrilling trump of God's word, resounding through man's inward being, bring down those proud pretensions, those high and haughty imaginings of delusive self-righteousness which gleam aloft so fair to fancy's eye, but which, if not thus shaken and precipitated by timely strokes of reproof, would fall at last from the heights of vain-glorious boasting, overwhelming the soul in despair, as it passed through the Dark Valley, or hurling it into destruction, as it entered the gates of eternity.

Yea, the word of God "is like as a fire, and as a hammer, that breaketh the rock in pieces." More irresistible than the fires and the hammers by which men have blasted and broken the Alpine rocks of St. Bernard and the Splugen, and formed a way into the sunny south through mountain barriers that seemed to defy their efforts, the Word, when it comes "in power and in the Holy Ghost," can go through the most rugged and obdurate natures, "preparing a way for the Lord." It can "exalt every valley," elevating all low and carnal conceptions—all grovelling and sensual feelings. It "can make low every mountain and hill," bringing down all pride and prejudice—all the lofty imaginations of ignorant self-sufficiency. It can "make the crooked

straight"—substituting for guile and artifice, for sophistry and self-deception the wise simplicity of "a good and honest heart." It can "make the rough places plain"—subduing all rebellious passion, smoothing down all the asperities of irritable temper, abolishing all hard thoughts and impatient feelings toward God,—all envy, malice, and uncharitableness towards man.

And it is not merely by the force and fire of its rebukes—by the terrible earnestness of its denunciations and warnings, that the word of truth thus subdues and humbles the soul. Nor is it by these qualities alone that it vindicates to itself the title of "the word of God that *liveth*." While it speaks with emphatic and awful voice of man's guilt and danger, it speaks also in tones of deepest tenderness and compassion to self-destroying sinners. It speaks in the language of most gracious encouragement to awakened inquirers. It "speaks a word in season to them that are weary." It addresses the most joyful congratulations, and holds out the most blessed hopes to them who believe. It "preaches peace to them that are afar off and to them that are nigh." It is no cold and formal enunciation of the scheme of grace that it gives forth. It is instinct in its every utterance with life and love. It thrills and glows, it melts and burns, as the outpouring of the full heart of our merciful and faithful High Priest. Its invitations, its entreaties, its assurances, are as tones from the very heart-strings of "Him who liveth and was dead"—who "ever liveth to make intercession for us." Its lamentations over man's wretchedness and obduracy are as the very "sounding of His bowels" of mercy. Its greetings and gratulations of welcome to the returning prodigal,

—its glad announcements and jubilant salutations to the family of God,—its exulting anticipations and alluring descriptions of heavenly bliss, are as the very voice of the Almighty when He "joys over His people with singing." It lights up all nature with the smile of a loving Father. It culls from all creation whatever is bright and fair to twine a wreath for the brows of Immanuel, that it may attract towards Him the admiring and trusting regards of mankind. It puts a new song into the mouth of the redeemed, even praise unto our God;—yea, it "compasses them about with songs of deliverance;"—it awakes the mountain echoes with its triumphant strains, and "the little hills rejoice on every side; the valleys shout for joy, they also sing." Its pealing anthems roll through the heavens, swelling away "in solemn, sweet vibrations," till the melodious wave breaks in surges of loud music on the shores of the eternal world, and, mingling with those hallelujahs of the heavenly host which are "like the voice of many waters," "enters into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth."

Yes, truly, the Word is full of life, imbued with divine energy, radiant with divine light, lustrous with divine glory. God "hath magnified His word above all His name." And the Word that thus liveth "abideth for ever." It is the word of Him who is the Lord, and who changeth not. Its promises are all "Yea and amen in Christ Jesus." It is the utterance of those purposes of God's heart which endure for evermore. It is the testimony of "the faithful and true Witness"—"Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." "The mountains may depart, and the hills be removed, yet His kindness shall not depart from" His Church, "nei-

ther shall the covenant of His peace be removed." "His word is for ever settled in heaven." "All flesh is grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass;"—all that is of man—all that is of earth, may fade and decay; "but the word of the Lord endureth for ever," even that "word which, by the gospel, is preached unto" the Church, and proclaimed by her to the world. The statutes of the Eternal King can never become obsolete. The proclamations of the Universal Sovereign are of no mere local or temporary authority: they can never become as a dead letter, void of force, of interest, or of efficacy. In all lands and in all ages they bear the seal and signature of Him to whom every knee must bow.

3.—Power of the Gospel. "I am a debtor," says Paul, "both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians, both to the wise and to the unwise. So, as much as in me, I am ready to preach the gospel to you who are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first and also to the Greek." It was in Judea that the Christian religion took its rise. It was of the Jews that, according to the flesh, Christ came. It was to the Jews that He confined His personal ministry. It was from among the Jews that His first disciples were chosen. It was to the Jews that He appointed His gospel to be first preached. And, had the religion of the gospel been like any of those religions of which man has been the author;—had it, like them, been local in its character—conformed to the prejudices, adapted to the habits and prevailing ideas, of a particular nation; had it owed its origin or its success to

temporary circumstances,—to the fostering wing of the civil power, or the position and influence of its first propagators;—had such been its character or its early history, then, indeed, had it been an act of presumption, of which one might have been well "ashamed," to go forth into other lands, proclaiming this religion, and calling upon men, whose position and peculiarities were wholly different from those of the people among whom it arose, to conform themselves to a system thus foreign in its growth and strange in its characteristics.

But, though the religion of Christ had its origin among the Jews, it was not Jewish. It was stamped with no national features. It was conformed to no national tastes or predilections—to no national feelings or prejudices. It was founded on no mere national traditions or associations. It was universal and permanent in its adaptation to *man*, wherever he might be found, or in whatever circumstances he might be placed. Its heralds and propagators, indeed, were men, and as such they partook of those national characteristics and personal idiosyncracies which are not eradicated, but consecrated and sanctified, by grace; but they were not themselves the *authors* of the message which they bore; nor was it derived from their fellow-countrymen. The system of doctrine which they taught was not the product of any school of philosophy in which they had been reared, nor was it inspired by the spirit of the age in which they lived. The religion which they sought to spread was not a plant indigenous to their own land, and which must languish, as a sickly exotic, in a different soil and under other skies. "The gospel which they preached was not after man: neither had they received

it of man, neither were they taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." "Flesh and blood had not revealed it to them, but their Father who was in heaven." Human wisdom did not devise its doctrines: human feeling did not dictate its teachings or requirements: but God Himself was its author. "The God of the spirits of all flesh" had adapted it to the common wants of humanity, and committed it to His servants as a boon fraught with blessings for our ruined race. "The treasure was in earthen vessels," but "the excellency of the power was of God."

Therefore it was that Paul,—a Jew, a native of a subjugated and tributary land, the follower of a despised and crucified Master, a member of "the sect that was everywhere spoken against,"—was not ashamed to bear abroad the gospel, and to claim for it the obedience of faith among all nations. Therefore it was that even before the lofty walls of imperial Rome he was not ashamed to unfurl the gospel banner, and sound the gospel trumpet, summoning the proud mistress of the world to surrender. Therefore it was that amidst the manifold idolatries of Athens and Ephesus,—amidst the luxuries and impurities of Corinth,—amidst the corruptions of Thessalonica and Philippi, he was not ashamed to publish the high and holy, yet humbling doctrines of the Cross. Haughty as the Romans were by nature, proud as they were of their martial exploits and their wide dominion, there was a power in the gospel to subdue and to humble them, because that gospel was of God. Habituated as they were to scenes of carnage in the bloody field, and to spectacles of brutal cruelty in the crowded amphitheatre, there was a power in the gospel

to melt and to soften their hearts, and to make the suckling of the wolf gentle and meek as a lamb. Boastful as the Athenians were of their learning and their arts, there was a power in that gospel which men accounted foolishness, to "destroy the wisdom of the wise, and to bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent." Wholly given as Athens was to idolatry, there was a power in the gospel to "turn men unto God from idols, that they might serve the living and true God." Lascivious and polluted as Corinth was, there was a power in the gospel to cleanse the foulest heart, and give peace to the most guilty conscience. Manifold as were the temptations and trials which beset those who sought the way of peace amidst the abounding snares of these heathen and profligate cities, the gospel was sufficient to guide, to arm, and to uphold them: the blessed gospel of Christ was the "power of God unto salvation to every one that believed, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." Therefore was Paul not ashamed of that gospel, nor afraid to test its powers in the most unpropitious and unfavourable circumstances. Therefore did he and his associates in the apostleship so earnestly and so confidently "preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness, but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God."

Yes, it was to the exhibition of those very truths which were at once most distinctive of Christianity and most distasteful to the world, that the apostles ever looked for success in their mission.

In preaching the gospel they had many prejudices to

contend with,—prejudices which, though various in kind, were all deeply rooted and inveterate, and which met them wherever they turned. If they went to the Jews, they found a people imbued with carnal expectations concerning their promised Messiah, and ready to resent every hint that was thrown out of the futility of their fond anticipations. If they turned to the Greeks, they found among them a proud confidence in their philosophic schemes and subtle speculations; and a vain trust in the sufficiency of man's natural powers for the investigation of truth, and for the promotion of virtue and happiness.

How then did the apostles deal with those whose prejudice and pride were thus arrayed against the humbling doctrines of the gospel? Did they attempt to soften down or explain away whatever might be offensive or unpalatable to those whom they addressed? No! Natural prudence, indeed, might have dictated such a course, and devised expedients for carrying out such a time-serving policy. In speaking to the Jews, they might have passed lightly over whatever was humiliating in the Saviour's history. They might have dwelt only on the miracles by which He "manifested forth his glory,"—on the deeds of beneficence and compassion which He wrought,—on the divine attestation from the opened heavens of the Father's love and approbation toward Him,—on the dazzling effulgence of His transfiguration,—on the triumphal honours of His ascension,—on the universal authority with which He was now invested, and on the predicted establishment and extension of His kingdom throughout the whole earth. In speaking to the Greeks, they might have exhibited the match-

less loveliness of His character, the calm dignity of His bearing, the purity and excellence of His precepts, the beauty with which He clothed the naked form of Truth, and the bright prospects which He opened up to His people in a future state. They might have represented Him to these Greeks as living such a life as their own philosophers would have recommended, and dying, like their own Socrates, a martyr to the truths which He maintained, and the virtues which He inculcated. They might thus have endeavoured to mitigate the offence of the cross,—to throw a halo round the character and history of their hero which would have commended Him even to the natural man; they might have striven to cast a veil over all the deep abasement and the bitter anguish which He endured when the curse of a broken law lay upon Him.

But, on the contrary, the apostles placed in the forefront of their preaching that very doctrine of salvation through a crucified Redeemer which was most repugnant to the carnal prejudices of the Jews, and most humbling to the intellectual pride of the Greeks. Instead of being ashamed of the cross, they placed it in prominence as their chief glory, and used it as their mightiest instrument for the accomplishment of the work given them to do. Instead of being ashamed of Christ as the Crucified One, it was in this character that they most loved to contemplate Him, and in this character that they held Him forth most conspicuously to view. In Christ Crucified they beheld the foundation of the sinner's hope, the "author of eternal salvation," the source of all quickening, enlightening, and sanctifying influence. And in the gospel, which sets forth Christ as crucified,

they recognised the great instrument which God had appointed, prepared, and promised to bless for the salvation of souls. They knew that that Word, of which the Crucified One was at once the author and the theme, could not return to Him void, but must prosper in that work to which He had sent it, and in which He had undertaken to give it efficacy.

Therefore did they so boldly and uncompromisingly preach salvation through Him who died a malefactor's death as the substitute and surety of evil-doers. Therefore did they subordinate every other consideration to this vital truth, that Christ died for us and rose again. Therefore, while so lovingly pourtraying the character of Christ—the purity of His example and of His teaching,—while so vividly describing the works of wonder which He did, and the beams of glory which shot at intervals through the clouds of humiliation that overshadowed Him, did they so emphatically dwell on His sufferings as a sacrifice for sin. Therefore did they so earnestly attest that "this was He who came by water and blood,—not by water only, but by water and blood," —not merely with water for purification, but with the blood for atonement,—not merely as a Reformer, but as a Redeemer.

It is related of the Emperor Constantine, that when marching on an expedition against powerful enemies, and oppressed with anxiety concerning the issue of a contest on which most important results depended, he beheld in the mid-heavens the sign of the cross luminously emblazoned, and surmounted by the inscription, "Conquer by this." And the legend adds, that Christ appeared to him by night with the same sign of the

cross, and directed him to use it as his military ensign. Without waiting to inquire in what proportion the elements of fact and of fancy may be mingled in this story, we may be reminded by it of this all-important truth, that the banner under which the Church must conquer is—not, indeed, the sign of the cross emblazoned before the eye of sense, but that of which the cross is the sign —even Christ Crucified, held forth to the eye of faith. Under this banner the Church must rally all her forces: in subserviency to this must she use all other instruments and agencies: by this banner,—not in virtue of any glittering adornment that garnishes or surmounts the staff by which it is held up, but in virtue of that strong breath of the Spirit which expands its rich folds in all their ample breadth, and displays its precious devices and inscriptions,—by this banner must the hosts of the Lord be cheered and stimulated to the onset; and by this must their enemies be constrained to bow or to flee before them.

Such was Paul's persuasion. "And I, brethren," he says to the Corinthians, "when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God: for I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."

And it was in consequence of a "heavenly vision," more bright and wondrous, and more credibly attested than that to which the conversion of Constantine has been attributed, that Paul was led to adopt this resolution. Once he was directly of an opposite mind: he determined not only to know every thing or any thing for himself, in preference to the crucified Nazarene, but

to do all in his power to obliterate the name and the memorials of Jesus from the earth, that he might constrain others to follow in that course, and seek that knowledge which he had chosen for himself. He "thought with himself that he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which things he also did in Jerusalem, and many of the saints he shut up in prison." "And he punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, he persecuted them even unto strange cities." With this mind and purpose, he was journeying "to Damascus, having authority and commission from the chief priests." But suddenly, "at mid-day, he saw a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about him and them that journeyed with him." He fell speechless and amazed to the earth, and he heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." "Trembling and astonished, he said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do."

The words of the Lord are words of power, and words of life: their entrance into the soul that is subdued by the Holy Spirit gives light more glorious and more vivid than that bright effulgence which shone around the persecutor and blasphemer. And though for a while the bodily eye of Saul was closed, it was that, amidst darkness, and seclusion from the objects of sense, he might grow in spiritual knowledge and meekness, and might learn to value more that light which shines upon the

soul, and reveals the things that are unseen. And when outward sight was restored to him, he determined that *it* also should be consecrated to the Lord of life and light, and should be used in constant co-operation and harmony with that inward illumination—that spiritual perception which had been given to him. He determined that in every thing on which his eye should rest he should endeavour to find that which declared the glory, or illustrated the perfections and the work, of Him who had called him out of darkness into light, and had sent him forth as a witness and an ambassador to declare His great salvation. He "yielded himself unto God, and his members instruments of righteousness unto God." He devoted all his powers and all his acquirements to the service of Him who had bought him at so unspeakable a price. He sought to have every faculty of his nature baptized into Christ, by the influence of the Holy Spirit. He determined, with the light of that new revelation which had been made to him,—with that spiritual eyesight which had been imparted to him, to explore all the records of inspiration, all the glories of creation, all the wonders of providence, all the stores of learning and art, that from each of these he might derive aid in commending and exalting Christ. He resolved to employ them all as mirrors to reflect the beams of the Sun of Righteousness. As the ground of his own hopes for time and for eternity,—as the refuge of sinners and the model of saints,—as the source of all comfort and purity and joy,—as the great theme of the books of Nature and Providence and Revelation, he determined to know nothing but Christ. Ay, and he determined to know and to exhibit Christ in that very aspect in which it

seemed to the men of the world most preposterous to boast in Him,—even as "that Crucified One," whom they regarded as "a root out of a dry ground, having no form nor comeliness—no beauty that they should desire Him."

He resolved that, wherever he went, he should "know no man after the flesh, yea, that though he had known Christ after the flesh, henceforth he should [so] know Him no more." As regarded men, he resolved that he should have no respect of persons,—he should know no distinctions but that which God himself recognised—the distinction "between the righteous and the wicked, between him who doeth good and him who doeth it not," between "him who believeth and him who believeth not." As regarded Christ, he resolved to know Him, not as He appears to the eye of the natural man,—not as He appears either to the worldling, to the sentimentalist, or to the philosopher, but as He appears to the eye of faith—most glorious and excellent on account of those very features in His character and work which are most unlovely and unattractive to the proud, the self-sufficient, and the carnally-minded.

In this determination he fortified himself when, by the promptings of the Spirit and the leadings of Providence, he was drawn toward Corinth; and when, contemplating the sphere of labour on which he was about to enter, he formed the plan, and selected the instruments, of that spiritual husbandry by which he should strive, through the blessing of God, to transform that which he found as a field of luxuriant but baleful weeds, into a well watered and fruitful garden. And he confirmed himself all the more decidedly in this resolution,

because he perceived that in this sphere he should be surrounded with peculiar temptations to depart from the principle he had adopted; and that, from the very circumstances which occasioned this temptation, any relaxation of the rule on which he had hitherto acted, would be specially dishonouring to the Master whom he served, and detrimental to the best interests of those whose salvation he sought. Corinth he knew to be the very seat and centre at once of earthliness and sensuality, and of boastful and perverted ingenuity—of "philosophy and vain deceit." He knew that there "the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eye and the pride of life"—pride of purse and pride of intellect, reigned triumphant and absolute. He knew that the surest way to ingratiate himself with the great mass of the people would be to congratulate them upon their riches and prosperity; —to extol the magnificence of their city; and, in striving to commend Christianity to them, to dwell chiefly on the temporal benefits it would bring to them,—on the lightness and easiness of its exactions,—on the favour of the God of Providence which its reception would secure to them. He knew that, among the more thinking class of the people, he should most easily gain a favourable hearing by entering into those curious speculations and subtle refinements which were the pride of their philosophers; and by imitating the pompous and inflated oratory of their rhetoricians. But he knew also that every word of such flattery, every appearance of such conformity to the tone and spirit of the blind leaders of that blind people, would be but as oil poured upon the fires of their raging lusts; and would prove the most powerful stimulus to the working of that poison for which he came to administer an antidote.

Therefore did he "determine to know nothing among them save Jesus Christ and Him crucified." Not that he resolved to ignore every other object of contemplation; and to overlook every other subject of inquiry; but that he determined to admit nothing into competition—nothing into association—with Christ as a ground of confidence; and to accord to nothing any other place than one of strict subordination to the doctrine of Christ Crucified, as an instrument for affecting, subduing, or purifying the soul. He resolved to view everything in its relation to Christ, and to consider nothing as worthy of his regard, or as fitted to be employed as a means of advancing the objects of his mission, except in so far as it could contribute to the illustration of the great truth that "Christ is all and in all," and to the commendation of Christ Crucified as the great device of Heaven for man's deliverance from guilt and from pollution.

That this was the import of the apostle's resolution may be gathered both from the whole strain of his epistles, and from all that is recorded of the style and substance of all his teaching. Christ, the Crucified Redeemer, is the foundation, the bulwark, and the corner stone of that stronghold into which he called upon all to flee for refuge. To Christ, in one or another of His offices and attributes, his eye was continually directed; to Him he had constant reference in everything that he said; of Him he never for a moment lost sight. But he did not shut his eyes to all other objects: he did not strive to cast them out of his remembrance. On the contrary, from that central and commanding position which he had chosen as the base of his operations, and where he had fixed his standard,

he looked round, like a skilful general, on the whole panorama that opened to his view; he took note of everything that could be turned to account in prosecuting the campaign on which he had entered, and in advancing the cause of Him in whose strength he fought, and in whose name he displayed his banners. He fixed his attention, not upon that which was fair to behold, but upon that which could contribute to the success of his enterprize. With keen and practised perception, his eager eye roved over all the fields of Inspiration, of Providence, and of Creation,—over all the works and ways of God,—over all the deeds and pursuits of men, that from every quarter he might gather that which might promote his grand design; and that he might thoroughly know and improve all the advantages of that position which, at the command of Him whom he served, he had taken up.

Not only from all the law and the prophets;—not only from all the dealings of God with his peculiar people, and from all the ritual of the ancient dispensation;—not only from the words of the great Teacher Himself, and from the marvellous history of Him who was "God manifest in the flesh;" but from all the aspects of heaven and earth,—from all the traits and characteristics of that human nature which he had so deeply studied,—from all the creeds and customs of the nations around,—from all the literature and science in which man boasted,—from all the gorgeous spectacles and shows that delighted the eye of Greece or of Rome,—from all the athletic contests and competitions of the arena,—from all the pomp and circumstance of war,—from all the splendours of royalty, and all the

adornments of rank and wealth, as well as from all the degradation and debasement of vice, and all the miseries of disease and poverty;—from each and all of these things he sought to draw that which might evince man's need of a suffering Saviour;—which might illustrate the nature of the Christian warfare, and induce man to enlist under the banners of the Redeemer;—which might brighten to the eye of faith the reward of "him that overcometh;" and might lead others to "glory," like himself, "only in the Cross of Christ, by which the world was crucified unto them and they unto the world."

Thus must the Church, in all ages and in all lands, seek to be strong and efficient as a witness of God. Her ministers and her members alike must act and speak as those "before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth crucified among them." "A dispensation of the gospel hath been committed to them;" and in their several spheres they must "shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of truth," and "testifying the gospel of the grace of God." So far from being "ashamed of the gospel," they must claim for it a peerless pre-eminence among all the means of advancing man's true interests, whether for time or for eternity. They must render all their gifts and graces, all their faculties and acquirements, all their powers of observation and perception, tributary to its defence and confirmation.

And surely they have good reason to engage with all the energy engendered by hope and faith in the promulgation of "the glorious gospel of the blessed God." The gospel is the most gladsome and precious light that ever burst upon this fallen world. Even when its earliest

beams stole through the thunder clouds that had gathered black and threatening over our first parents in the hour of their transgression; and when it fell, dim and obscure as yet, but sudden and unexpected on their trembling souls, as they cowered, abashed and terrified, before their offended God;—even then did its beams suffice to chase away the chilling and noxious gloom of despair;—to rebuke and banish those hard thoughts of God which the Tempter had too successfully suggested;—to produce that penitent and lowly abasement which all the terrors of deserved wrath could not have engendered; and to restore again some measure of that love and confidence, in which alone acceptable obedience can be rendered to God. By this light, reflected from types and symbols, and held forth by priests and prophets, whatever was good and fair in the character of the Old Testament saints was originated and fostered.

When, in the fulness of time, the Sun of Righteousness Himself arose, though veiled at first by clouds of humiliation which concealed His glory from the carnal world, and obscured His brightness even to the few whose eyes had in some degree been purged and opened, yet even through these clouds did He diffuse such beams of gospel light and love, that beneath their genial influence there sprung up flowers of the fairest hue and sweetest fragrance, and plants of righteousness, which, though somewhat marred at first in their proportions and stinted in their growth, were yet rooted and grounded in love, and prepared to shoot forth in luxuriant fruitfulness under the clearer and more powerful effulgence of these fostering rays. And when the Sun, after passing beneath a cloud so black and portentous

that He seemed to be altogether quenched in darkness, and to have withdrawn His shining for ever from the earth, burst forth at last in the full splendour of His meridian glory, and shed down His unobstructed light on eyes from which the Spirit had removed every obscuring film and perplexing haze; O, then, how fair was the scene which the garden of the Lord presented! How lovely was the aspect of that Pentecostal Church from which the Saviour reaped the first ripe fruits of His glorious ascension,—over which the Spirit breathed with such reviving and purifying efficacy, sweeping away all obscuring mists, and letting in the glad light of the gospel of peace, fresh from Heaven, in all unperverted purity and undiluted power, to exert its native and rightful influence, till "They that gladly received the word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all they that believed were together, and had all things common; and they sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved!"

In all ages and nations, to the extent in which the gospel has been received in simplicity and sincerity, its effects have been similar. And it is only because so

many among those to whom it has been proclaimed have blindly rejected and despised it,—because so many of those who have *professed* to receive it have misunderstood and perverted it, or have given but a nominal acceptance to its truths and invitations,—and because even they who have sincerely obeyed its calls have so often walked inconsistently with it, and forgotten "what manner of spirit they were of,"—it is only on these accounts that among those to whom that gospel has been declared there has yet appeared so much of ungodliness and carnality, of selfishness and strife, of pride and self-confidence, or of repining and despondency, and of coldness and distrust toward God. For it is the nature of the gospel, when its truths are spiritually discerned and sincerely believed,—when the offers it makes are cordially accepted,—when the objects which it brings before us are realized and stedfastly contemplated,—it is its nature, when thus embraced and obeyed, to awaken in the heart hatred of sin and delight in holiness; distrust in ourselves and confidence in God; indifference to the things of time, and full satisfaction in the things that are spiritual and eternal; unruffled peace amidst adversity, and meekness in prosperity; love to God, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, and love to all that are of the household of God; lowly thoughts of ourselves and lowly desires for our own aggrandizement; cordial interest and sympathy toward all men, with special longings and earnest endeavours after their spiritual welfare and peace.

4.—Maintainance and Manifestation of the Truth. The strength of the Church, then, —the strength which "God hath commanded" for her, and which the Spirit imparts,—consists, in the first place, in the possession and preservation of the truth,—the truth as it is in Jesus,—the pure, undiluted, unperverted, ungarbled truth; ay, and the truth in its systematic completeness and harmony, as ascertained by a careful investigation and analysis of the entire scriptures. For, whatever be the mawkish and morbid antipathy entertained by some to systems and symbols, creeds and confessions, there *is* a system in the Word as well as in the works of God. Without the recognition of that system, revelation can no more be understood than creation: and for a Church to ignore or to slight the system of truth that pervades the Scriptures, would be a practical solecism, as palpable and pernicious as it were for a Scientific Association to overlook the *system* that is manifest in all the architecture of the heavens and all the structure of the earth.

But, while it is necessary for the Church's strength that she should recognise the truth in all its breadth and all its bearings, and, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, should go on to perfection, it is not to be supposed that every statement of truth made for the edification of her members, or for the instruction and ingathering of those who are yet without, must be in itself a compendium of divinity. Her accredited teachers must be "scribes instructed unto the kingdom of heaven," that they may be "like a man who is a householder," and may have the household stores of the family of God so arranged as to be ever within easy

reach; not that for every member of the family, and for every stranger within their gates, they may prepare on all occasions a compound of all the ingredients at their command; but that "out of their treasure they may bring forth things new and old," "giving to each a portion of meat in due season,"—"milk to babes and strong meat to such as are of full age;"—only taking care that the savour of the gospel be never awanting; and that Christ, who is the "all" of His people's salvation, be "in all" the food that is offered for their sustenance.

And it is not only on the ministers of Christ that a responsibility lies for the promulgation of Gospel truth. They are, indeed, in a peculiar sense, "stewards of the mysteries of God;" and, as such, it is specially required of them that they be "found faithful." But all who have been with Christ, and have been taught of Him, are called to be witnesses for Him, in their different spheres; and to contribute, as much as in them lies, to the diffusion of that light which has arisen on their own souls. The word of God must "*sound out*," in clear and thrilling reverberations, from those who themselves "know the joyful sound." The apostle Paul says of the Churches of Macedonia, "they first gave their own-selves unto the Lord, and unto us by the will of God." And it is "the will of God" that *all* who have "first given their own selves unto the Lord" should give themselves to His ministering servants, to co-operate with them, to be guided by them into walks of active usefulness, to encourage their hearts and strengthen their hands. Thus not only the office-bearers, but the private members of the Church may, as "fellow-workers unto the Kingdom of God, be a comfort unto them;"

and not the least effective aid may be that which they derive from "those women who labour with them in the gospel."

"Let him that heareth say, Come." "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." In proportion to the talents committed to any one, he is "a debtor both to the wise and to the unwise;" and he must strive to "do good unto all men as he has opportunity," that he may be able, without shame, to "give an account of his stewardship." If any, then, are "enriched in utterance and in knowledge," let them "exhort one another daily:" let them "teach others also," if it be only as "teachers of babes," or instructors of the ignorant in the simple elements of gospel truth. If any have time at their command, let them devote it to the God of their life, that they may prepare others for eternity. If any have this world's goods, let them dedicate their substance to Him "whose are the silver and the gold," that they may be the means of bringing nigh unto others that Word of God which is better than all riches. If any have business habits and capacities, let them employ their abilities in "the oversight of the outward business of the house of God," that the ministers of Christ may "give themselves to the word of God and to prayer." If any have influence, let them use it in behalf of truth and righteousness. Let neighbours use their influence with neighbours; masters with servants; friends with friends; relatives with relatives; speaking to them, however simply, if only heartily and earnestly, of the one way of salvation set forth in the word of truth. Let "Andrew first find his own brother,

Simon," and let "Philip find Nathaniel." And if any to whom they speak express a doubt whether "any good thing can come out of Nazareth," let them not think it necessary to discuss at large the external evidences of Christianity, but let them at once invite those whom they would win to "come and see;"—let them trust to the self-evidencing power of the truth,—to that "light of life" which flows directly from the face of Jesus, and so shines into the soul as to vindicate and proclaim its heavenly origin.

But, of all influence, that which is intrusted to parents is at once the most powerful in its nature and the most constant in its operation. And, while that influence begins to take effect even before the child can understand the language of the lips, and continues throughout to be exerted as much through that which is *seen in* the parent as through that which is *said by* him, it is not the less important that "the instruction of a father and the law of a mother" should be in accordance with divine teaching, and should be early and earnestly impressed on the pliant mind; for without this they can have no reason to expect that it shall be given them to "rejoice greatly because their children are found walking in truth." Let parents, therefore, make it their object to bring the full power of the truth to bear upon the minds of their children "as they are able to bear it." And, as Hamilcar led his son Hannibal to the altar, and there took of him an oath of perpetual enmity to Rome, so let a Christian father strive to enlist his son, by the most solemn engagements, in a life-long warfare against sin and error.

Thus is every one, in his own place and capacity,

called to exert himself for the diffusion of divine truth. But it is not merely by clear statements and forcible arguments that that truth is to be maintained and commended. The beams of the Sun of Righteousness, as well as those of the natural sun, may be turned to a good account by refraction and absorption, as well as by simple reflection or transmission; and best of all by a combination of these processes. The light of the sun as truly manifests itself in the varied hues of the flowers that deck the earth, in the rich greenery of the summer woods, in the soft verdure of smiling meadows, in the gorgeous glow of the evening clouds, in the deep azure of the skies, and the prismatic tints of the rainbow, as in the clear lustre of the planets, in the mild radiance of the moon, or in the bright gleam given back from the calm bosom of ocean, lake, or river. And the light of gospel truth may be reflected in iris hues, and transmitted in variegated tints, as well as in those rays which *seem* more simple only because more complex, and *appear* colourless to the eye only because in them all colours are blended, and all distinctions are neutralized by combination. The truth may be exhibited in particular applications, in practical examples, or imaginative illustrations, as well as in abstract principles, and comprehensive generalizations.

Let it be observed, however, that, in order to produce that varied beauty which we admire in nature, the beams of the sun, complete in all their essential elements, must shine upon each individual plant and flower. It is by exposure to these beams that the vegetative juices and tissues acquire those distinctive properties in virtue of which they reflect the rays of one colour, while

absorbing those other rays which enter into the composition of solar light. It is under the influence of these beams that the buds swell and expand, and it is by the showering down of these beams in such profusion and purity that opportunity is given to the leaves and flowers, thus prepared, to exhibit their various qualities, and exercise their various functions, in the reflection of those many-hued yet harmonious rays which reveal the landscape to the eye. Even so, in order to produce those diversities of gifts, and to consecrate those diversities of powers and attainments, by which the witnesses for the truth may maintain a testimony, distinguished at once by unity and variety, it is necessary that the Sun of Righteousness should shine upon each of them, in all the brightness of that glory which is full of grace and truth, and shed down upon each of them all the fostering, sanctifying, and enlightening influences of His heavenly beams. As, along with the *luminous* emanations from the natural sun, there come also those calorific and actinic elements which, though themselves invisible, impart to the plants on which they fall the power of returning the rays of certain colours, while retaining others; so from the Sun of the spiritual world there flows not only the light of truth, but that invisible grace,—that warm and plastic influence,—which, operating variously in various cases, and modified in its results by the natural and acquired peculiarities of the individuals on whom it acts, produces that variety of proportion and combination in which the many-coloured rays of truth are given back by different minds. And if the constituent elements of the Sun's beams are not all visibly or equally reflected, it does not follow that any

of them are lost. If not radiated, they are retained: and if absorbed, they are not abortive. They go to the formation of that character, and the development of those mental capacities, in virtue of which certain rays are more vividly and powerfully reflected: and by these rays the images of truth, in various forms of illustration, may be photographically traced in the prepared and receptive mind of the beholder.

Let us, then, strive and pray, that, under the quickening and illuminating beams of the Sun of Righteousness, all the endowments and acquirements of men,—all the powers of reason and the pursuits of research, may be rendered tributary to the diffusion and defence of the truth; and that the light that flows from Heaven may be reflected on earth, not merely in the refulgent gleam of lucid exposition, and of clear and lively demonstration, but in a manifold and multiform exhibition, glowing and glistening with the iridescent hues of imagination, with the warm tints of genial cordiality and affection, with the soft lustre of musing memory, and the bright coruscations of exulting hope. Let all literature and art and science,—owning "one Lord," even Him "of whom are all things and for whom are all things,"—acknowledging "one faith," even the faith of the gospel,—consecrated by the "one baptism" of the Spirit's irradiating and purifying fire,—unite together to glorify the name and advance the work of that "one Father, who is above all, and through all, and in all."

Let

> "divine Philosophy,
> "Not harsh and crabbed, as dull fools suppose,
> "But musical as is Apollo's lute,"

attest the harmony between the word and works of God; and call forth from all the spiritual and all the material universe ten thousand thousand voices, to proclaim the wisdom and might and love of Him who is the brightness of the Father's glory, the express image of His person; and who upholdeth all things by the word of His power. Let History record the struggles and triumphs of the truth; and exhibit the development of the divine purposes,—the wondrous working of Him who can make "the wrath of man to praise Him," whose "counsel shall stand, and who will do all His pleasure," though "the heathen rage and the people imagine a vain thing." Let Biography illustrate the transforming power of grace and truth in the individual soul; and shew the sustaining influence of faith and hope amidst the battle of life, and the solemn crisis of death. Let Fiction and Allegory represent, in contrasted embodiments, the opposite tendencies and fruits of "that which is born of the flesh" and "that which is born of the Spirit." Let Oratory appeal to the conscience, and rouse the feelings, and light up the understanding by broad, bright flashes of God's vital truth. Let Poetry strew with her loveliest flowers the triumphal path of the Gospel; and weave garlands for Him who is "fairer than the children of men," and who, "in His majesty, rides prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness." Let her "sing forth the honour of His name, and make His praise glorious." Let her cheer and animate those who follow in His train. Let her excite them to thanksgiving, and supply to them incense confected according to the law of the sanctuary, and kindled by fire from heaven. Let her compass them about with songs, and put into

their joyful lips the fit expression of holy feelings and aspirations. Mated with Music, let her proclaim to them, in glad carols, that "the winter is past and the time of the singing of birds is come." Let her make the air vocal around them, and bid the welkin ring with the high praises of God. Let her so multiply and modulate her strains that they who listen may, as if surrounded by all the choristers of nature, ever hear some note to which their heart thrills responsive, and which falls with soothing or exhilarating effect on their ear. Now, like some familiar finch, some homely linnet or thrush or blackbird, let her warble out her cheerful songs, to enliven the scenes of every-day life,—to throw a charm over the path of unostentatious duty, and relieve the monotony of toil and care. Now, like the nightingale, let her pour out a wealth of rich and varied melody amidst the shades of sorrow and the gloom of affliction, rejoicing in tribulation, and attesting the presence of Him "who giveth songs in the night." And now, like the lark, let her spring from her nest in the lowly heart; and, rising invigorated out of the depths of hope-engendering "experience" and tranquil musing, let her soar and sing amidst the sunshine of divine love, ringing out her bold "Excelsior!" as she mounts right upward to the glowing skies, till she trills her extatic praises at the gate of Heaven, and pours her exulting raptures into the ear of God.

5.—Interpretation of God's Teachings. Yes, high is the mission of sanctified intellect; and holy are the ministrations of those "priests to God," who,—whether or not they be set apart by outward forms to His

more immediate service in the gospel of His Son,—have received "an unction from the Holy One," that they may "know all things," and who consecrate their gifts and their graces alike to Him who is at once "the Way, the Truth, and the Life." Among the many courts of that wide and wondrous temple in which man is called to worship the great Lord of all, there is room enough for all who are qualified to serve the God of truth in any office; and there is scope enough for the discharge of the most various functions, and the exercise of the most various powers of perception and of utterance. "The whole earth is full of the Lord's glory." It is a sanctuary hallowed throughout by the majestic goings of Jehovah, as the Lord of Creation and Providence;—doubly hallowed by the footstep of the Incarnate God, the Mediator of the covenant of grace, by whom it has been purchased, and who shall yet reign throughout its wide extent. Wherever, therefore, we wander, "the place whereon we stand is holy ground." On every spot where we rest, if our eyes were opened, we might see "a ladder reaching up unto heaven and the angels of God ascending and descending." It needs but that we should awake in order that we may be constrained to exclaim, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not:—this is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." There are more comings and goings between Heaven and earth than we are aware of. There are communications coming forth from the Lord of Hosts by the hand of strong angels "caused to fly swiftly:" and there are reports going up of the manner in which these messages have been received;—too often, alas, of the way in which they have been neglected.

There are telegraphic signals and intimations thrilling along the electric chain that unites this terrestrial colony with the seat of divine government; but which are abortive because we do not connect with the conducting wire an index sufficiently delicate and sensitive to be affected by them; or because there is no one at hand to read them off and write them down. There are whisperings of divine wisdom floating through the air; —there are voices of instruction and consolation and admonition wandering over the earth, seeking some one who can understand them: and if they find "an interpreter, one among a thousand," who can translate them into the language of mortals and tell what they are saying, they may speak peace to the weary, or give needful warning to the wayward. But too often they are left to sigh themselves away unheard, and die because no man regardeth, and there is no one to catch them up, and echo them abroad in human speech. "God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not."

In divers manners God speaks to the children of men. He speaks not only by His Word and His Spirit, but by His works of creation, and His dealings in Providence. "There are many kinds of voices in this world," besides those of articulate speech, "and none of them is without signification." Every event, however seemingly trivial; every product of creative power, however minute; every visitation of sickness, and every fresh gush of health; every grief and care; every joy and comfort, has a voice which, if heard aright, would be recognised as coming *from* God and leading *to* God. There are voices soft and low; there are voices loud and startling; there are voices solemn and sublime. These are all in unison

with each other: all contribute to one grand symphony, —one mighty and majestic diapason; and to the opened and instructed ear all come fraught with deep and momentous meaning. But in order to understand the "signification" of all these voices, and to appreciate the harmony that pervades them, various qualifications are necessary.

There must be a union with Christ, for He is the "all" of Creation and Providence, as well as of Grace; and He is at once "in all" the means of communication between Heaven and earth, and "in all" the gifts and graces, the renewed powers and perceptions, by which man discerns what God discovers and displays. When "Heaven opens" "the angels of God ascend and descend *upon the Son of man.*" The messengers through whom God conveys to men intimations of His will and confirmations of His truth come for the sake of Christ, and through His mediation; and it is only by being in Christ that we can receive and apprehend these messages as addressed to us. It is by being placed in the cleft of the Rock that we can see the glory of the Lord passing by, and not be terrified or consumed, but cheered and enlightened. Again, as a result of this union with Christ, there must be the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, who is the great Interpreter of God's works and ways, as well as of His word. The Spirit must be present, at once to *excite* and to *gratify* those desires after divine teaching to which a promise of satisfaction is given. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and He will shew them his covenant." "Evil men understand not judgment, but they that seek the Lord understand all things." "The works of the Lord are

great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein :" and "He hath showed His people the power of His works.* It is by "going into the sanctuary of God," and there seeking light from the Word and the Spirit, that we are to "understand" those mysteries of Providence which are "too painful for us when we think to know them"† by the exercise of human reason. It is by observing, in a right spirit, the ordinances of God's grace on earth,—by "dwelling in the *house of the Lord*," and "beholding the beauty of the Lord," as we inquire in *that* temple, that we are to be prepared for inquiring in the temple of Creation,—for beholding the glory of the Lord as it is displayed in "the ordinances of heaven," and for discerning the symbolic meaning, as well as the outward beauty of those adornments that garnish the earth.

There are other hieroglyphics to be found among the vales and hills of this land of our pilgrimage, besides those of the kind which attract the eye of the traveller in the Wady Maghara. There are other "Written Valleys"‡ besides the Wady Mukatteb,—other "Writ-

* Psalm cxi. 2, 6.

† Psalm lxxiii. 16, 17.

‡ On the rocks of the Wady Maghara, among the mountains of Sinai, there are found hieroglyphics of a very ancient date, which are supposed to represent the subjugation of the surrounding country by an Egyptian King, designated as the "Lord of battles." In the Wady Mukatteb and Jabel el Mukatteb, numberless inscriptions, interspersed with figures of men and animals, are seen, rudely engraved on the rocks. These, if the theory of Mr Forster be true, and his interpretations well founded, were the work of the Israelites during their wanderings in the wilderness, and represent the leading events that followed their Exodus out of Egypt. There is still, however, much doubt as to their history and import.

ten Mountains" besides the Jabel el Mukatteb: and, whatever be the origin or import of the characters inscribed by the hand of man on these Sinaitic rocks, there are images and inscriptions which the hand of God himself has everywhere engraven on His works; and which confirm the truth of Scripture, and illustrate the Lord's dealings with His people. Every scene of nature is a "Valley of Vision," wherein spiritual things are emblematically set forth and illustrated. Somewhere among the elements and on-goings of the material creation, every characteristic of human nature, and every incident in the experience of the Christian pilgrim, from his exodus out of the house of bondage to his entrance into the heavenly Canaan, is pourtrayed in the language of symbol; and significant representation is given of all the difficulties and dangers, all the encouragements and aids which are to be expected by the wayfarer whose face is toward Zion. Every tree has a tongue: every stone has its sermon: every running brook discourses eloquent music to the initiated ear. "Glory to God!" is written on every rock; it is thundered in every cataract; it is resounded from "heaven and earth and the seas and all deep places." And "Holiness to the Lord" is inscribed on every pillar and plinth, every arch and architrave, every cornice and corbel in the majestic temple of nature: surely, then, it should be written on the foreheads,—written on the hearts, of all who venture to officiate as priests in that temple; that they may be able themselves to observe, and to shew unto others, "the form of the house, and the fashion thereof, and the goings out thereof, and the comings in thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all

the ordinances thereof:" for "this is the law of the house; upon the top of the mountain the whole limit thereof round about shall be most holy. Behold this is the law of the house."

But in order that any one may be able to interpret the hieroglyphics, and to discern and decipher the inscriptions, thus written on the temple of creation, it is necessary that, in combination with acute perceptions, a lively imagination, and an intellect versed in analysis and analogy, he should have a heart touched by the grace of God, and a mind enlightened by that Spirit, whose office it is to glorify Christ, and by that Word which testifies of Him. The same qualifications also are necessary for rightly reading and applying the lessons taught by God's providential government of the world. If, then, there be those to whom the language of Creation and Providence is obscure and enigmatical, or who find it difficult to harmonize and reconcile that language with the voice of the Word, let them pray that some one may interpret whatever continues to be to them as the utterance of an unknown tongue. And let those in whom the gifts and graces requisite for profitably communing with Nature, and contemplating the scenes of human life, are combined in a larger measure than is granted to others, employ their powers in unfolding the significance of the Almighty's works; in "justifying the ways of God to men;" and in assisting their brethren "wisely to observe these things," that they may "understand the loving kindness of the Lord."

The result of all inquiries, conducted in a right spirit, into the meanings of Creation and Providence will be, not to diminish, but to increase our reverence for the

Scriptures, and our sense of dependence on Revelation, for instruction, both in truth and in righteousness. All that we learn from the study "of man, of Nature, and of human life," will tend at once to confirm the *truth* of the Bible, and to illustrate and impress the *truths* of the Bible. Creation, which is the work of God's lips and the word of His hand, and Providence, which is the revelation of His eternal purposes, both refer us to the volume of Inspiration, for the full exposition of that which they obscurely announce concerning the past and the present, and dimly shadow forth concerning the future. Whether we consider the *resemblance* or the *contrast* between the book of God's works and the book of His word, we find ever increasing reason, at once to acknowledge that the handwriting of both is the same, and to be thankful that the truths which the one speaks in parables and proverbs and dark sayings, the other enunciates so clearly, so authoritatively, and so fully.

In many respects there is a similarity between these books, marking them as the production of the same Author, and as intended to promote the same ends.

In their *style* there is a similarity. Both are distinguished by the same interesting and impressive variety. There is in each every gradation, from the most awful sublimity to the most minute and exquisite beauty. The towering grandeur of mountains; the strong magnificence of heaven; the solemn vastness of the lone and hoary deep; the rush of tempests, the roll of billows, and the roar of thunders; the dread and desolating march of War, Famine, and Pestilence, God's three great armies; the majestic rise and terrible fall of empires; these mighty voices of Creation and Providence,

find their counterpart in the awful utterances of Scripture,—in those "terrors of the Lord" which it reveals, —in the stupendous magnitude of the objects which it unveils,—in the tremendous emphasis of its denunciations and threatenings,—in the authoritative solemnity of its declarations and announcements. On the other hand, the loveliness of flowers; the beauty and melody of birds; the gleam and the music of waters; the bright tints of the glowing sky; the quiet flow of providential blessings; the calm current of domestic peace; the daily upspringing of fresh delights and innocent enjoyments; —these pleasing passages in the book of God's works have their parallel in the delightful pictures and the affecting narratives, the sweet assurances and glorious prospects, presented in the book of God's word.

And not only is there a similarity in the *style* of these books, there is a similarity also in their *substance*. Both speak of God: both tell of His power and majesty, His sovereignty and wisdom, His justice and benevolence. And both speak *of* man, and *to* man. They tell that he is a fallen being. They exhibit the ruinous and malignant nature of the sin by which he is polluted. They shew how impotent is all creature help for his rescue from the destruction which he has brought on himself: and they point to heaven as the only source of his deliverance.

Even in the *manner* in which these truths are set forth there is, to some extent, a similarity. In both books they are so written that for their right comprehension they must be searched out;—the book must be studied as a whole, that so the great ideas and principles by which it is pervaded may be discerned, and

light may be thrown on those parts which, separately viewed, might appear obscure and perplexing. But, though much may thus be done for the removal of difficulties, there will still remain in both of these books many things that, for the present at least, must appear mysterious in our eyes. As regards the works of God, Creation presents unnumbered problems which we cannot solve. We cannot tell how the seed sown in the ground springs up, and grows, and bears fruit: we cannot unravel the secret of animal life, or say in what it consists: we cannot explain the union of the soul and the body. And Providence also is full of mysteries and marvels. God's "way is in the sea, and His path in the great waters, and His footsteps are not known." His "judgments are a great deep." We cannot fathom His counsels, or follow the intricate windings of His procedure. So also in the word of God there are many things which, though not *contradictory* to reason, are above its grasp. The doctrine of the Trinity;—the transmission of guilt and corruption from our first parents;—the manner of the Spirit's operation in the soul;—the harmony between the divine sovereignty and human liberty;—these, and other points in the system of revealed truth, present much that is "too wonderful for us." Because they are so high they seem hazy, though luminous: and we have no telescope that can resolve the nebulæ into their component stars.

There is thus, to a certain extent, a correspondence between the characteristics of these two books. And it is well that this resemblance should be recognised and acknowledged, so far as it may really be traced: for thus we may be confirmed in our conviction that the

same Almighty Being is the author of both: and, if there be any who despise or neglect either of these books, while they hold to the other,—who admire God's works while they undervalue His word, or who love His word while they disregard His works, they may be led to perceive how far the same qualities which they prize in the one are also to be found in the other; and how far the objections which their ignorance or prejudice has raised to the one might be applied, with equal plausibility, to the other.

But still, while in many respects there is a resemblance between these volumes, in other respects there is a contrast between them: and it is impossible candidly to compare them together without perceiving how vastly the book of God's word, as a means of instructing the mind and affecting the heart, excels the book of His works. The higher our estimation of God's works, because of what they *do* declare, the higher must we admit the claims of God's word to be an account of its fuller and more impressive utterances on the same subjects. And the deeper our study of these different volumes, the more will we be impressed with the number and importance of those points on which, while the one is silent or enigmatical, the other is radiant with noonday light; or on which the one can, at best, but *propound* a question, to which the other gives a satisfactory solution. "All God's works praise Him." Day unto day uttereth speech: night unto night teacheth knowledge." And "the Lord is known by the judgment which He executeth:" His providential dealings with men manifest that "verily there is a God that judgeth on the earth." But, though Creation and Providence

may thus tell much of His might and majesty,—of His wisdom and justice, they speak but indistinctly, in this ruined earth, of His boundless love and spotless holiness. And, so far as they do reveal His compassion and goodness, and evince His hatred of sin, they make it only the more difficult to comprehend how His attributes are to be harmonized in His dealings with His rebellious creatures;—how the exercise of mercy, and the manifestation of love are to be reconciled with the strict execution of justice, and the exhibition of inviolable holiness. Yet all this mystery is made plain by those Scriptures in which Christ is "set forth, a propitiation through faith in His blood;" and in which it is shewn how "mercy and truth have met together; righteousness and peace have embraced each other."

God hath done wonderful things in creation. He hath launched into the regions of boundless space ten thousand times ten thousand flaming suns, with their attendant worlds fraught with the tokens of His power and wisdom. He hath garnished the heavens with radiant splendours, and adorned the earth with exquisite loveliness and teeming luxuriance. And yet more wondrous has been His working in those intelligent beings whom he hath called into existence,—those angels that do His pleasure, and those human creatures whom He formed after His own image. He hath done wondrous things in Providence,—terrible things that man looked not for, and liberal things of which men were unworthy. He hath whelmed the earth with a destroying flood that swept away the world of the ungodly. He hath restored the earth again to tranquil beauty and exuberant fertility. He hath "ruled in the kingdom of men; and

given it to whomsoever he would;"—subverting those thrones that seemed to be established as firmly as the everlasting hills; and raising to eminence and influence those nations that were once despised and insignificant. But these wonders of Creation and Providence are chiefly wonderful on account of the way in which they have been made subservient to God's purposes of grace: and it is by learning from Scripture what these purposes are, that we are to perceive both the *import* and the *importance* of those lessons which are taught by nature and by history.

Thus, then, on the one hand, it is true that the book of God's word and the book of His works mutually illustrate and commend each other; but, on the other hand, it is to be noted, that, while, for the highest and most practical purposes, the Word is complete in itself, the works of God require the light of Revelation to be thrown upon them, before their true significance can be brought out, or their teaching made available for promoting man's greatest and most vital interests as an immortal being.

6.—Applications of Divine Truth. Let a Church, therefore, that has been "awakened" to a sense of her responsibilities and exigencies, and that would "put on" all that "strength" which is to be derived from the truth, take measures for securing that her accredited teachers shall be men "mighty in the Scriptures;" but men, at the same time, instructed in all the reciprocal bearings and relations between the Word and the Works of God,—men who shall "perceive" when "God speaketh" in Creation and in Providence, as well as in Revelation. Let her endeavour to draw out, and apply to practical

use, all the abilities which any of her sons may possess for directing the light of inspiration upon the physical and moral universe, that thence it may be reflected back to intensify the lustre of the Word, and to enhance its efficacy for the guiding and cheering of those who use it as a lamp to their path. Let all who would seek to be instrumental in the revival of religion and the reinvigoration of the Church, stir up every gift that is in them and apply it to the elucidation of the truth,—to the defence and confirmation of the gospel, by every argument and illustration that can be drawn from any quarter within their reach. Let them employ the energies of their whole man, and the power of their whole resources, to operate upon the entire being of their fellowmen;—upon reason and conscience, upon imagination and affection. Let them bring the teachings of God's Word to bear, not only on the formation of men's creed, but on the moulding of their character and the regulation of their daily life.

Amidst the multiplied and motly appliances by which, in these days, the thirst for information and excitement is at once stimulated and gratified, it is specially necessary that they in whom superior gifts are sanctified by grace, should devote their endowments to the counteraction of that pernicious influence, which is exerted by those who have dedicated the talents committed to them to the inflaming of men's lusts, and the pampering of men's depraved propensities. The mighty engine of the press should not be left in the hands of those who pervert it to the dissemination of falsehood—to the encouragement of folly,—to the fostering of vanity and vice; but should be claimed and consecrated, as an instrument which God himself has provided for the pro-

motion of wisdom and knowledge, of happiness and holiness throughout the world.

It should be the aim of those in whom the requisite qualifications are united, to provide a literature in which the essence of Christianity shall be diffused without being diluted;—a literature which the truths of the gospel shall pervade, without being perverted, and animate throughout, without being attenuated in the circulation;—a literature in which Christian teaching shall be *adapted in form* to all that *nature* which God has given to men, but not *adulterated in substance* to suit man's *unnatural* alienation from the source of all that is good and pure;—a literature which shall *sympathize* with all man's wants and weaknesses, but shall *symbolize* with none of his fond conceits and pernicious errors;—a literature healthy and hearty, but not earthly or epicurean;—in a word, a literature incorporating the divine and the human after the pattern exhibited in that incarnate Word, in whom dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily;—who was touched with the feeling of all our infirmities, and "tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin."

Nor does it lie only with those who are qualified for the *production* of such a literature to avail themselves of the press, as a means of promoting the cause of truth and righteousness. All may contribute to the efficiency of this instrument, by reading, by circulating, and by commending those productions in which Christian truth is embodied. What they cannot produce they may procure: and by their example, as well as by their advice, they may induce others to prefer that mental food which is wholesome,—even though it be homely, (which does not follow,) to that which, however highly spiced

or richly flavoured, ministers at best only to intellectual gratification, or to the transient excitement of feeling and fancy. And while the guiding hand of those who enjoy superior advantages, and "who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil," is necessary for the selection of such seed as may be profitably sown broadcast over the land, or as may be suitable for particular fields, the humblest and most illiterate may co-operate in this good work, by personally engaging in the distribution of religious tracts and periodicals;—a department of Christian activity which, though cultivated of late to a wide and ever-increasing extent, is yet far from being occupied and improved as befits its importance and its promise. Why should not the Christian people of every town and parish in our land unite together, to secure that there shall not be a family within their reach which is not systematically and frequently supplied with such reading, and, if possible, plied with such "hearty counsel," as shall tend, by the blessing of God, to win them to Christ and guide them in the way of life?*

Surely in a world where sin is so rampant and sorrow is so rife;—in a world where, at every beat of our pulse, some heart ceases for ever to beat;—where, at every breath we exhale, some spirit leaves its tenement of

* The author takes the liberty of recommending, from his own experience, the weekly circulation of covered tracts on loan, by visitors undertaking each only a small district, that the work may be done regularly and efficiently, without being burdensome to those engaged in it. Under a system of this kind, which he established soon after the commencement of his ministry, and which he has now superintended for above eleven years, the aggregate amount of reading supplied to a population, consisting of about 400 families, has been upwards of four millions of pages. Besides tracts,—of which,

clay; it becomes all to whom the truth has been made known, to use without delay, every means of pressing upon their fellowmen that great, but fearfully neglected, remedy which God has provided for all the wants and woes of our common humanity.

When our Sovereign recently assumed the direct government of her Indian dominions, she issued a proclamation, promising pardon to those who had rebelled against her, on their laying down their arms and giving practical evidence of submission to her authority. But one of the greatest hinderances to the success of this proclamation was the unwillingness on the part of many to believe in its sincerity; and they who had instigated the revolt used every artifice to prevent the offers of mercy from being credited and accepted. For the removal of this obstinate and pernicious incredulity, reliance was placed not merely on the extensive promulgation of the amnesty by the officers of the Crown, but on the testimony of those who availed themselves of the profferred pardon to the full and faithfnl accomplishment of the promises in which they put their trust. Even so the Prince of Peace, when He had ascended up on high and had received gifts for men, even for the rebellious, inaugurated His direct administration of the kingdom of God on earth by a proclamation of forgiveness to all

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unless the size be large, two are generally put under each cover,—such periodicals as the *Christian Treasury* and the *Sunday at Home* are circulated; and a certain number of tracts are also left in possession of the families. Each district contains only from 8 to 10 families, and the parcels of tracts given to the visitors for circulation are changed each alternate month. The prosecution of these operations has been much facilitated by liberal grants of tracts from the Religious Tract Society of London, and from Mr. Drummond, Stirling.

who should lay down the weapons of their rebellion. But there are few who believe the report. "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." And it is the part, not only of the ministers of Christ, but of all who have tasted that God is gracious, to testify, from their own experience, that if any "confess their sins He is faithful and just to forgive their sins, and to cleanse them from all unrighteousness." Nor shall their united attestation to the truth of God be in vain: "for greater is He that is in them than he that is in the world."

There is light where darkness brooded; there's a rising from the dead,
Where many bones, and very dry, erewhile around were spread.
There's a breathing o'er the valley of the Spirit of the Lord;
And from their graves the slain come up at His reviving word.
They have heard a voice beside them, and a trumpet blast afar;
And exceeding great the army that stands up, prepared for war.

Yes, there's hope for all the nations, for the work is of the Lord;
And the weak through Him are mighty, when they grasp the Spirit's sword.
The arm that wrought those wonders once whereof our sires have told,
Is waking in its strength again, as in the days of old.
The hallowed light of bygone years streams forward through the gloom;
And the tree, whose seed was martyr-blood, shall yet revive and bloom.

Then blessed be the Lord our God! and let His praise be sung
Aloud by every nation, every kindred, every tongue!
Ye who have watched and waited for the Spirit from on high,
Lift up your head rejoicing, for redemption draweth nigh.
And ye who once, with feeble faith, groped on in dubious light,
Praise Him who thus "increaseth strength to them who had no might."

THE CHURCH'S STRENGTH.

"Put on thy strength, O Zion."—Isaiah lii. 1.

"Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus."—1 Tim. ii. 1.

SECTION SECOND.

"The grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant, with faith and love, which is in Christ Jesus."—1 Tim. i. 14.

"I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."—Gal. ii. 20.

"Be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord."—1 Cor. xv. 58.

II. **Grace in the Heart.** We magnify the Truth; but we do not deify it. We extol those Scriptures which testify so plainly and so powerfully of Christ; but we do not exalt them into that place which is due to Christ Himself. We rejoice in the Word, as bringing a revelation of grace to the mind; but we do not rest on it, as superseding the necessity of a direct communication of grace to the heart. We hail with gratitude, and hear with reverence, the voice that speaks to us from Heaven; but we do not "*worship* the celestial *sound*." We value whatever can contribute to the elucidation, the defence, or the illustration of the Sacred Records; but we do not fix our regards on the *letter* of the Divine Oracles to the exclusion of the spirit that pervades, or of the Spirit that inspired

and that gives them efficacy. We commend the study of bibliology; we repel the imputation of "bibliolatry."

It is not the truth of God, but the God of truth, that can save the soul. Yea, the truth can be really apprehended only when the Father of lights, from whom it cometh down, Himself descends with it into the heart. In order that we may be savingly enlightened, "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness," must Himself "shine in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." The gospel can "come in power" only when it "comes in the Holy Ghost." "The Life is the light of men:" and we must experimentally know that "with God is the fountain of life," before "in His light we can see light." Before we can "comprehend what is the breadth and length, and depth and height, and know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge," we must "be strengthened with might by God's Spirit in the inner man;" "Christ must dwell in our hearts by faith;" and we must be "rooted and grounded in love:" for it is by love only that love can be understood or appreciated. The Church is called to "hold fast the form of sound words;" but it must be "in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." The mere intellectual perception of the truth,—the mere incorporation of it in the Church's standards,—the mere maintainance of it, as a matter of orthodoxy, is not all that is implied in obedience to the call, "Put on thy strength." In order that the Church may be strong, she must be pervaded and animated by that living faith which the Spirit alone can work. And this faith must be, not merely a cordial belief in the doctrines of Scripture, but a realizing

apprehension of spiritual things,—an appropriation of the provisions of God's grace. And above all things it must be a direct reliance on Christ,—it must be the embrace in which the soul receives a personal and a living Saviour, and leans upon Him with the feeling and the consciousness that He is very near.

1.—The Power of Faith. Faith is the strength of the Church, and of her individual members, in virtue of that union which it establishes and maintains between them and Christ as the "Head of the Church," and the "Head of every man." And let it be well marked as an invariable law of the spiritual world,—a principle enunciated by Scripture, confirmed by experience, and illustrated by all the analogies between creation and grace,—that it is just in proportion to the closeness of the Church's connection with Christ, and the directness of her intercourse and communion with Him, as the source of her life, that she is strong and stable, prosperous and pure.

This truth seemed to be preached to us from the skies by that bright and mysterious visitant* which recently attracted all eyes, as it sailed majestically across the heavens. And while we watched its progress, and marked the change in its position and appearance, as, evening after evening, the veil of light was withdrawn, to exhibit its growing splendour, "night unto night" seemed literally to "shew knowledge." For centuries it had been lazily floating at the distant outskirts of the solar system, dull and dreary, dim and dark. But as it

* The Comet of September and October, 1858.

returned from its long and cheerless wanderings, and drew near to the great source of light and centre of attraction, how rapid became its flight and how radiant its form! With what triumphant exultation did it seem to speed from star to star; flinging its broad, emblazoned banner far across the sky, and ever accelerating its motion, till it reached the point of closest approximation to the sun!

So it is with the visible Church. When she wanders away from the Sun of Righteousness, forgetful of her immediate and absolute dependence on Him, and attempting to compensate for the loss of His presence and favour by the adornments of art, by the decencies of morality, by the formalities of a complicated ceremonial, or the intellectual appliances of literature and learning; she becomes cold and contracted, languid and lifeless; powerless amid all her proprieties, and effete amidst all her elegancies. With all the multitude of her services, she is unserviceable in the cause of the Lord: and, with all her accomplishments, she can accomplish nothing worthy of a Church of Christ. The glory is departed. The salt has lost its savour, and the lamp its light. But if, amidst her wanderings, she hears the call to return to Him from whom she had so far departed; if He "turns her, and she is turned," yielding to the attractive influence which flows from Him who hath been "lifted up that He might draw all men unto Him;" then, the nearer she approaches to the great source of light and centre of life, the more brightly does she shine, and the more fleetly does she move. Ever with greater alacrity does she run the race set before her: ever with warmer love and intenser zeal does she glow. Broader

and brighter does she unfurl her standard: with more exulting joy and more vigorous energy does she pursue her course; until she "looketh forth as the morning; fair as the moon, clear as the sun, terrible as an army with banners."

And as it is with the Church as a body, so is it with each of her members. It is by faith only that they can live, and have life more and more abundantly; for it is by faith that they are united to "Christ, who is their life." If now they live, yet it is not they but Christ that liveth in them. They are "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." By faith they wait for "the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ; whom having not seen they love; in whom, though now they see Him not, yet believing they rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory; receiving the end of their faith, even the salvation of their souls." By faith they "endure as seeing Him who is invisible." For "faith is the substance (the realizing apprehension) of things hoped for; the evidence (the assured conviction) of things not seen." Faith is that Heaven-imparted principle by which our hearts and minds,—our whole faculties and feelings, are brought under the influence of things future and things invisible, as if these were actually seen, and already present, forcing themselves on our observation, and constraining us to a recognition of their existence, their properties, and their claims.

It is in this telescopic, telegraphic, and tenacious quality,—this power to bring near the distant, and to grasp the unseen, that all the efficacy of Faith consists. It is not by the righteousness which it *works*, but by the righteousness which it *receives* that it justifies. It is not

by its own essential properties, but by that which it appropriates that it saves us. It is not by its own inherent strength, but by the strength on which it lays hold, that it sustains us. It is not by its own native energy that it purifies the heart, and overcomes the world, but by the motives and influences which it brings into operation. It is not, in a word, by any intrinsic virtue in itself, but by virtue of the things which it contemplates, and into connection and contact with which it brings us, that it gives peace, purity, and power to the soul.

Faith is the hand by which we lay hold of Christ. It is the ear by which we effectually hear His voice. It is the eye by which we behold His character and His work; His sufferings and His glory. It is the mouth by which we feed upon Him; and by which, if it be opened wide, we are filled out of His inexhaustible fulness. Now it is not to our hand that we are indebted for the objects which we grasp. It is not to our ear that we owe the sounds by which we are pleased. It is not to our eye that we are to ascribe the light that cheers us; nor is it by our mouth that those things are provided by which we are fed. These organs and members, indeed, are necessary that we may become partakers of the objects to which they are severally suited, and with which they have to do; but it is the *object*, not the *faculty* that delights and nourishes us.

The question, then, of most urgent and immediate importance for each of us is not, What is the structure of the organ? but, Of what influences is it the channel? What relations does it establish between that which is within us and that which is without? If a man says

"I have an eye capable of seeing," we would not, in order to ascertain whether it were so, think it necessary to enter into a discussion on the construction of the eye, or into an investigation of the various humours and nerves and membranes which constituted his visual organ; but we would at once ask what it was that he saw. And, before we could be persuaded that he actually had a distinct perception of the object which he named, we would require to be satisfied that his conduct was such as must naturally and necessarily result from the contemplation of that object. If we saw him groping and stumbling at noonday,—rushing at full speed toward the verge of a precipice, or sitting unmoved when the child whom he had lamented as lost suddenly entered and stood before him, we should scarcely be persuaded that he actually saw. Even so, if a man says "I have faith," we would test the truth of his assertion, not by the endeavour directly to probe the depths of his spirit, or to investigate his state in the light of some metaphysical theory regarding the nature of faith; but by inquiring what that is in which he believes, and what is the *influence* exerted on him by those objects in which he professes belief.

It is quite a conceivable case,—nay it is one which is too often exemplified,—that a man may be able, with the utmost precision, to state the doctrines of the Christian faith;—to describe their mutual relations;—ay, and to calculate, by some theological formula, their due and fitting influence upon men's character and conduct; while he himself may be utterly a stranger to their power in his own experience. The terms, by which he describes the various objects of his professed belief,

may be to him as practically unmeaning and uninteresting as the signs by which an algebraist designates an unknown quantity. His reasonings may be without a flaw: his conclusions may be perfectly sound: but the whole may be a matter of mere intellectual speculation, by which his heart is unmoved, his conscience unaffected, his course uninfluenced.

True faith, on the contrary, has to do not with names but with realities,—not with the sign but with the substance. It "stands, not in the wisdom of men, but in power of God." It rests, not on the demonstrations of logic, but on the "demonstration of the Spirit,"—not on scientific experiment outwardly observed, but on spiritual experience inwardly felt,—not on that which is heard by the ear, but on that which the eye seeth. It is that through which the soul is *possessed* by divine truth,—*charged*, as if with spiritual electricity, by "the powers of the world to come;" so that whatever currents may tend to drive or draw it astray, it

"Streams like the thunder-cloud *against* the wind."

By faith the soul, like that "aerial" flower of the East which is sustained only by the light and air of heaven, draws all its support from above, and "lives in the Spirit." By faith it turns, like the heliotrope, ever toward the Sun, and drinks in the beams of divine glory. By faith it mounts up with wings like the eagle, supported by invisible elements, and finding in that which is unseen both a medium of access and a means of ascent to the serene heights of Heaven.

It is when the members of the Church individually exercise this faith, and live by it, that the Church is

really strong. By faith she overcomes the world. By faith she rises from the things of sense and time, to a region where the storms that convulse the lower atmosphere cannot shake or injure her. Strong in faith, she gives glory to God. Stedfast in the faith, she resists the devil. Through faith she "subdues kingdoms, works righteousness, obtains promises, stops the mouths of lions, quenches the violence of fire, escapes the edge of the sword, out of weakness is made strong, waxes valiant in fight, turns to flight the armies of the aliens." Through faith all difficulties and discouragements seem light: and the Church is ready for every good work, confident that she cannot ask too great things of the Lord, she cannot hope too great things from Him, nor undertake too great things in His name; for "All things are possible to him that believeth."

This assurance, if rightly understood, is a sovereign antidote at once for despondency and for presumption. To the believer in the actual exercise of faith all things that faith prompts him to seek or to aim after are possible; in the *first place, because faith unites the soul unto God and lays hold on divine strength.* This is the source of all the power that is exercised by faith. The believer is through Christ united to Him with whom, in the widest and most absolute sense, all things are possible. Believers have fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ,—fellowship not merely in the sense of intimate and confidential intercourse, but in the sense of actual participation and partnership in all that belongs to the Father and to the Son. Not that they are invested with the divine attributes, but that in all these attributes they are interested. Not that they have a

direct control over the resources of the Almighty, but that these resources are all used for their benefit, and are available for the fulfilment of their desires, and the accomplishment of their requests when they pour out the prayer of faith. "All things are theirs, for they are Christ's and Christ is God's." Christ, as their Head and representative, sitteth at the right hand of the Majesty on high. He maketh continual intercession for His people; and Him the Father heareth always. Nothing is too great for them to ask in His name; for His merits are infinite. Nothing is too great for the Father to bestow upon them; for His resources are inexhaustible; and He loves them with an everlasting and a perfect love. Nothing is too great for God to do for them; for His power is boundless, and His wisdom is unsearchable. And nothing is too great for God to work in them and through them; for with Him is the residue of the Spirit: He can "strengthen them with all might, according to His glorious power;" and "their labour shall not be in vain in the Lord," when they "labour, striving according to His working which worketh in them mightily." They "can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth them." All things are possible to him that believeth, because the God in whom he believes is the Lord God omnipotent who reigneth over the universe;—"of whom and to whom and through whom are all things."

Do we then say that every wish of the believer shall with certainty be gratified,—that every suffering of which he complains shall be removed,—that every undertaking in which he engages shall infallibly prosper? Do we exalt the believer into a god when we say that

the resources of Omnipotence are available for the promotion of his interests,—for the accomplishment of his desires? Do we encourage him to think that all things should be in accordance with his mind? Do we foster in him a self-willed and imperious disposition? Do we afford him ground for pride or self-confidence? No: on the contrary, we humble him. We strip him of all ground of glorying in himself or in any creature. We tell him that it needs the aid of Omnipotence to save, to sanctify, and to strengthen him, because he is so unworthy and so weak in himself. We tell him that it needs the boundless resources of the Universal King to supply his need, because he is so utterly destitute in himself. We tell him that it needs the protecting arm of the Almighty to defend him, because he is in himself so helpless. We tell him that if anything is possible to him it is not through any inherent power of his own, but through the power of that gracious and glorious Being on whom he is at every moment dependant. We tell him that if he receives anything of the Lord, it is not according to his merit, but according to his faith that it is given him. We tell him that of himself he knows not even what to ask for;—and that it is not to himself,—a weak and erring mortal,—but to the faith which God has wrought in him, and which God delights to honour, that all things are possible.

And this leads us to observe, in the *second place*, that practically all things are possible to him that believes, *because the aims of faith are in accordance with the will of God.* The believer, *so far as he is really led by faith* in the desires which he cherishes and the pursuits in which he engages, will find all things possible to him, because

he seeks after those things which God is not only able but willing to grant.

The *believer* may sometimes, like a vessel tossed with tempests and carried away by strong currents, be hurried, by the force of temptation and the power of indwelling sin, into a course which God disapproves and cannot bless. Or, led by the false and deceitful lights of his own reason and his own imagination, he may propose to himself ends and aims which God has not warranted him to pursue. And in either of these cases his strength is gone, and he is weak as other men. But *faith*, like the compass of the mariner, ever points true, and indicates the course in which success and safety may be found. And so far as the believer obeys the dictates of faith, he is secured against disappointment; and may cherish a well-grounded confidence that no insurmountable obstacle shall arrest his progress. To him all things shall be possible. The desires and efforts that arise from ignorance, from presumption, from self-seeking, from any thing that belongs to the old man, have no promise of success; and it is well that they should be baulked,—however apparently innocent in themselves,—that so the believer may be made to remember that he is not his own, and has no title to have a will or a way of his own, independently of God's appointment. But the aims of true faith must be in accordance with the will of God, and therefore they shall not be frustrated. Faith is the gift of God. It comes from Him, and necessarily leads to Him and to His ways. It is stamped with the impress of His character. It is a holy principle; and it engenders holy desires, and prompts to holy efforts. It is founded on the word of God,—on

His promises, His commands and invitations, and therefore its dictates must be conformable to His will.

That only can be an object of faith which God himself has declared, which God has warranted us to expect, or has encouraged us to seek after. And the expectations which He Himself has raised He will never disappoint: the hopes and aspirations which He has taught us to cherish are secure of fulfilment. The pursuits in which He has commanded us to engage, and in which He has promised us success shall infallibly prosper. "The desire of the righteous shall be granted." Whatever difficulties or obstacles may lie in the way, He has pledged Himself that they shall be removed. However arduous the toil,—however severe the struggle, in which obedience to His charge may involve us, He is able and ready to sustain us. However formidable the foes that beset us,—however perilous and protracted the conflict, into which our fidelity to Him may lead us, He has undertaken to bear us through unscathed, and to give us the victory. However large the demands which we need to make of Him, in prosecution of those enterprizes which He has required or incited us to undertake for the promotion of His glory, and the extension of His kingdom, He will honour all our drafts; He will comply with all our requisitions. He will never send us on a warfare on our own charges, nor leave us destitute of the provision needful for the accomplishment of His work, and the fighting of His battles.

"If ye abide in me," says Christ, "and my words abide in you,"—if ye abide in me by a living faith, and my words abide in you as your directory and your remembrancer, respecting all that you are to undertake

and all that you are to pray for,—"ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you." If you are indeed the servants of the Lord, and are engaged in His work, you may "arise and build," knowing that "the God of Heaven, He will prosper you," notwithstanding all the sneers of those who despise, and the assaults of those who oppose you. If you are the soldiers of Christ, and are fighting the good fight of faith, you are maintaining a cause which must be triumphant, for it is the cause of the Omnipotent. Speak not then of difficulties or dangers:—"look to your marching orders:"—follow your great Captain;—obey His commands; and He will insure you the victory.

It is then through faith, as laying hold upon the strength of God, and conforming all its aims to the revealed will and purposes of God, that the believer finds all things possible to him. But we observe, in the *third place*, that it is also through faith *as leading him to the stedfast prosecution of that course, and the confident use of those means which God has appointed and has promised to bless.* To *believe* that all things are possible, contributes in no slight degree to *render* them possible. It is true that the believer can neither command success by any power of his own, nor win the interposition of God by any merit in his own character, in his own works, or even in his own faith. But one of the chief means by which God has provided for the success of His people in all that is agreeable to His will, is by presenting to that faith which he has wrought the assurance of triumph, and the prospect of an abundant reward for all the toils and efforts in which they engage according to His appointment. He shews them what

He would have them to do: He puts the instruments of labour into their hands; and He bids them "not be weary in well-doing for in due season they shall reap if they faint not."

We are familiar with the effects produced in ordinary life, and in the conduct of secular affairs, by that confidence of success which is grounded on a faith in the constancy of nature's laws and operations, and in the sufficiency of those mechanical, moral, and intellectual agencies which men use in the prosecution of their various avocations and enterprizes. What is it that impels the husbandman to toil early and late in preparing the soil and casting in the seed? It is faith in the efficacy of these means, seconded by the needful influence from the skies, for the securing of a prosperous result. It is confidence that he labours not in vain. It is the assurance that "seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease." What is it that induces the merchant to embark his capital in large undertakings, and enter into transactions and correspondences with distant lands? It is faith in the general honesty of those with whom he deals;—faith in the great principles of trade and commerce;—faith in the successful issue of his enterprizes. What is it that prompts the mariner to launch forth on the mighty deep,—to commit his vessel to that ocean which seems so untameable, and amidst whose trackless waters he might seem so likely to be utterly bewildered and lost, helpless and powerless? It is faith in the art by which he has been taught to subdue those elements that appear so capricious, and to render them subservient to his purposes: it is faith in the right

construction and sea-worthiness of his vessel;—faith in the chart and compass by which he steers;—faith in his own nautical skill and experience. What is it that leads men of science and of enterprize to undertake those gigantic works which not long ago it would have been deemed madness to speak of;—such as the construction of roadways not only over mountain, over sea, but *under* mountain and *under* sea; and the putting of a girdle round the world, by which instantaneous communication may be held between the inhabitants of the opposite ends of the earth? What is it that sustains the astronomer in his nightly watch, while searching through the sky for some planet that has never yet beamed on mortal eye, but of whose orbit he has received intimation from the perturbations of some other member of the solar system? It is faith in the principles of science, in the teachings of natural philosophy, in the appliances and appurtenances of art. What is it that has impelled our brave countrymen in distant lands to such deeds of heroism? what is it that has cheered and animated them in the encounter with such fearful odds? It was faith in the anticipated issue of the contest;—faith in their own strong arms and indomitable hearts;—faith in the skill of their leaders, and in the destinies of their country; faith in the power of a valour and a perseverance, that will not yield to any foe, nor succumb to any difficulty, nor shrink from any danger or privation.

If, then, men can do and dare such things through the influence of that faith which is based on human calculations,—on human powers and resources; and if by that faith they are sustained, and carried on to victory;—how much more may the people of God attempt all

things that are in accordance with His will, and persevere in every course which He has marked out, and brave every peril, and cheerfully undertake every labour, upheld by the assurance that God is with them,—that it is His work they are doing, His purposes they are accomplishing,—that God hath blessed them and they shall be blessed.

There is this difference, however, between the faith which is exercised in the ordinary affairs of life and that by which the believer is animated;—that whereas the faith that rests on the creature, and springs from unassisted nature, makes small beginnings, and gradually advances in the boldness and extent of its grasp;—whereas that faith prompts first to experiments on a limited scale, and only when these have been found successful emboldens to greater efforts and larger undertakings; the faith which is grounded on God's word, and wrought by His Spirit, begins at once with the greatest thing that it can ever have to do. At its very birth this faith grasps the mightiest ideas that the human mind can conceive; it realizes the most momentous truths, it embraces the most precious assurances and the most marvellous invitations that even the revelation of God presents. The first exercise in which the new-born soul engages is to apprehend by faith the stupendous realities of eternity,—the vast conceptions of God, of immortality, of sin, of judgment to come, of salvation through the sufferings of Immanuel. The first act of its will is to give the obedience of faith to that wondrous gospel which calls upon it to lay hold upon Christ,—to renounce every other confidence,—to roll upon Him all the burdens of its guilt,—to commit it-

self to Him absolutely and unreservedly,—at once and for ever.

In this respect the operation of faith is illustrated by the history of naval architecture. The first vessel that we read of was one built by the direct command of God, on a scale commensurate with the magnitude of the occasion which called for the divine interposition. It was for the rescue of our race, and of all the animal tribes that inhabited the earth, from utter extirpation, that that vessel was constructed. "By faith Noah, being warned by God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house." It was according to the pattern shewed to him by God that he built that ark. It was in the belief that it would be found both necessary and sufficient that he engaged in the preparation of it, and entered into it with all his house. It was not by his own experience or observation, —it was not by faith in his own calculations or devices, that Noah was led either to anticipate the necessity or to trust in the sufficiency of this gigantic undertaking; it was by simple faith in the declarations and promises of God. And now, after four thousand years of experience in the art of ship-building, the greatest triumph of mechanical skill and enterprise has been the construction of a vessel somewhat similar in its dimensions and proportions to the ark of Noah. Even so it is that by faith we are prompted and enabled to enter at once, and without any tentative processes, into the most momentous transaction in which we can ever be called upon to engage;—by faith we enter into the Ark Christ: —by faith we come to Him, even as we are, with all our guilt and pollution; and receive Him, even as He is,

with all His justifying righteousness, and all His sanctifying grace :—by faith we commit to Him the keeping of our souls for time and for eternity, assured that whatever "floods lift up their voice," He is "mightier than the noise of many waters,"—He is able to keep to the last day that which we have committed to Him.

Men are ever ready to ask, What great thing shall I do that I may be saved? "What shall I do that I may work the works of God?" But this is the great thing, —this is the one thing needful,—"this is the work of God, that ye believe in Him whom He hath sent." After all the speculations of philosophy,—yea, after all the investigations of theology, and all the inquiries of biblical criticism, nothing greater, nothing higher can be discovered than this. The most laborious student, the man of mightiest and most cultivated intellect, can find no rest but in reverting to the simple faith of the gospel,—in receiving the kingdom of God as a little child, and in resting solely and entirely upon Christ.

And to those who have really believed in God as He manifests Himself in the face of Jesus Christ, what can be too great, what too wondrous to be implicitly believed? At what promise can they stagger through unbelief? What object, after which God has encouraged them to aim, can appear unattainable? What agency, which God hath provided, can appear inadequate to the accomplishment of those ends for which He has undertaken to bless and to prosper it? What can be too great for those to expect in answer to prayer who realize the mighty power, the wondrous love, the unchanging faithfulness of Jehovah? What attainments in holiness and in usefulness can be too great for those to hope for,

who believe that it is God that worketh in them and through them? Who can appear beyond the reach of pardoning and sanctifying grace, to those who know their own unworthiness, and who believe that they have themselves been washed and justified and sanctified? What restoration of lost souls, what revival in the Churches, what transformation in the whole aspect of society, can be too great for those to hope for, who know that religion is the work of God, and who have experienced the efficacy of God's Word and God's Spirit in the renewing of their own minds, and the entire regeneration of their own natures?

In order, however, that our projects and prospects regarding the advancement of pure religion in our own souls, in the community around us, and in the world at large, may be so framed as that they shall not be disappointed, it is necessary that, in all our expectations and efforts, we should keep distinctly in view the mutual and relative bearings between the part which is taken by God in this work, and the part which must be performed by man. If we fix our attention exclusively either on divine agency and influence, or on human activity and receptivity, we shall be in great danger either of rushing into presumption or sinking in despair;—most probably we shall begin with the one and end with the other;—we shall begin with looking for that which we are not warranted to expect, or attempting that for which we are incompetent; and shall end in giving way to despondency, because our baseless hopes are unfulfilled.

The way in which religion is to be promoted and sustained by the conjunct operation of divine and human

elements,—by man's improvement of what God bestows, is significantly indicated in the words uttered by Isaiah in the name of the Lord: "Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness; let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together: I the Lord have created it."* Many have been the seasons of special revival, from Pentecost down to our own times, in which the process here described has been visibly and illustriously exemplified; and in every case, either of individual or more general awakening, the same causes must be in operation, in order that the blessed fruits here spoken of may be brought forth.

The process by which God has ordained that true religion should advance and prevail, is here illustrated by the manner in which the earth is clothed with verdure and crowned with fruitfulness. Both in the natural and in the spiritual creation, it is needful that the heavens should pour down their genial influences from above; but in both cases also it is necessary that the soil should be prepared by careful cultivation, and that it should perform its own part,—opening to receive the seed and the fertilizing shower, and putting forth those productive powers which have thus been quickened and imbued with the principles and germs of fruitfulness.

When the heavens above are like brass, and the earth beneath is like iron;—when the soil has become hard and sapless through long and parching droughts;—when "the ground is chapt because there is no rain in the earth;" in vain would the most precious seeds be scat-

* Isaiah xlv. 8.

tered on the impervious surface of the ground, if left unaided to produce their own effect. They would only afford food for the birds, or be swept away by the winds. Yet,—though in such circumstances all the operations of husbandry must be difficult,—something more may be done than merely to strew the seed over the soil. The fallow ground may be broken up; the stubborn glebe may be loosened and turned over by the plough; and the seed may be harrowed in. All this, indeed, would be in vain, were no showers to come down to water the earth thus prepared. But he who expects the rain to be at length poured down, will continue his labours, arduous though they may be; nor will he count his toil misspent though no immediate result should appear. And when the rain does descend, it is not enough that it should lave the surface of the earth, or sweep in torrents along the furrows, or settle and lodge in the hollows of the field. It must find access into the soil: "the earth must open" to receive it. The waters, it is true, must make a way for themselves into the hardened clay, or the siccid dust. The earth of itself can neither bring down the rain, nor diffuse moisture through its own pores. In proportion to its dryness, it exercises a repellent, rather than an attractive power upon the water which it so much needs. It is only by being brought into immediate contact with the limped and mollifying element, poured down upon it from above, that the parched soil can be made to relax its stiff and sterile rigidity; or that its dusty and incoherent particles can be fused again into the rich and fertile loam, that clasps and cherishes the deposited seed. Still, however, it is necessary that the earth *should* thus open,

—that it should yield to the influence brought to bear upon it, and that it should, in consequence, assume a new character, and exercise new powers. It is necessary not only that it should receive into its bosom the waters sent down from above, but that it should impart, along with the elements of its own renovated substance, a portion of the moisture thus infused into it, to the plants which it bears; so that these may grow up, under the fostering beams of the sun, strong and vigorous, —well formed, well compacted, and well developed in all their parts.

Now, it is even thus with respect to the origination and revival of vital religion in the hearts of men. Divine influence, and human effort are, each in their own place, needful for this purpose. While "the Heavens drop down from above, and the skies pour down righteousness, the Earth must open," in order that "they [the Heavens and the Earth combined] may bring forth salvation;" and that "righteousness, together" with salvation may "spring up." It is the Lord alone who ever could "create" either that righteousness or that salvation; and He hath encouraged us to hope and to pray that He may create them; but only by that process, and in that connection which is here described. He hath given us no warrant to expect or to ask, that in any case He should either supersede the influence of the Spirit by any other agency, or dispense with the forth-putting of those powers, and the discharge of those functions, which the Spirit is given to enable men to exercise. We have no reason to despair because of human impotence, while omnipotent power is ready to undertake for us. But if we would experience the greatness

of God's power, we must defer implicitly to His wisdom, and acknowledge, without reservation, His sovereignty; we must submit to be dealt with according to that scheme which He has devised; we must receive with humble gratitude all that He has seen good to bestow on us, and set ourselves to do, without cavilling or questioning, all that He requires of us; we must "work out our *own* salvation with fear and trembling," knowing that "it is God that worketh in us, to will and to do of His good pleasure;" and we must be stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord," for the salvation of *others;* knowing that "our labour is not in vain in the Lord."

2.—The Progeny of Faith. Thus by Grace the Church is strengthened, through Faith. Grace working in the heart, and producing a spiritual apprehension of the Grace that is revealed in the Truth, engenders Faith; and that Faith, uniting the soul unto God through Christ, lays hold on divine strength; conforms its aims and purposes to God's will; prosecutes with vigorous alacrity God's way; and engages with hearty earnestness in God's work, confident of success, because assured of God's blessing.

But it is not only through the *power* thus directly exercised by Faith, it is also through the *progeny* begotten of her, that the Church is strong. The offspring of Faith are numerous; her "children are an heritage of the Lord:" they are as the arrows of the mighty; and she is happy in having "her quiver full of them." There is a family likeness among them all: as brethren they dwell together in unity, and are helpful to each

other. But between some of them, in particular, there is such a resemblance that they seem to be twin-births. They come before us thus linked and associated :—Peace and Joy ; Love and Gratitude ; Hope and Confidence ; Zeal and Patience.

First among the progeny of Faith there appear Peace and Joy ; "Being justified by faith we have peace with God ;" and "believing we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of joy." Through the abundance of *peace* the Church is strong to endure all temptation and discouragement. "In returning and in rest is she saved, in quiteness and confidence is her strength." "The peace of God keeps the hearts and minds" of her children "by Christ Jesus." And through the fulness *of joy* she is strong for active exertion ; strong to encounter difficulties and obstacles. "The joy of the Lord is her strength." Faith begets Peace,—that Noah,* to whom belong the dove and the olive-branch, and the radiant "bow in the cloud ;" and she says, "This same shall comfort us." "The Lord sitteth upon the flood ; yea, the Lord sitteth King for ever. The Lord will give strength unto His people ; the Lord will bless His people with peace !" She begets Joy,—that Isaac,† longed for and beloved, through whom such bright promises are to be fulfilled, and such rich blessings brought to the families of the earth : and she says, "God hath made me to laugh, so that all who hear will laugh with me." "Weeping may endure for a night, but Joy cometh in the morning. Thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness ; to the end

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* Rest or Comfort. † Joy or Laughter.

that my glory may sing praise to thee and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever!"

The peace which faith produces, and by which the soul is strengthened and sustained, is not such a peace as the world can give. It is not such as human reason can impart, or natural fortitude can engender or preserve. It is not the frivolous unconcern that sports on the brink of destruction, and laughs away all anxiety for the future, and dispels care and sorrow only by banishing all serious thought and shrinking from all rational inquiry. It is not that indifference or affected superiority to pain and misfortune, which proud philosophy teaches its disciples to assume. It is not that reckless hardihood or sullen insensibility which natural resolution or animal courage can maintain. In a word, it is not the peace of man's fallen nature, but it is "the peace of God." It is a peace which God alone can bestow, and which is to be found only in having God as our portion and our confidence. It is a peace which results from conscious reconciliation with God, and which consists in a cheerful and unreserved acquiescence in His will. It is a peace which is the gift of God through Jesus Christ; and which is wrought in the heart by that Spirit whom Christ, as the Prince of Peace, sends to His disciples from the Father. It is that peace which Jesus bequeathed to His followers when He said, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth give I unto you." It is His own peace;—that very peace which dwelt in His own bosom; and which must, therefore, include not merely the enjoyment of God's friendship, and the assurance of His favour, but the consciousness of an endearing and indissoluble relationship with

Him ;—the participation of intimate and confiding communion with Him ; and that harmony with His will, and cordial consent to His doings, which flow from a realizing apprehension of His attributes, and a conformity with His own glorious character.

Being thus deep and pure,—thus divine in its nature and origin, this peace "passeth all understanding." It passes the comprehension of worldly men ; for its source is invisible ; its essence is spiritual ; and, having no experience either of its production or of its power in themselves, they are utterly at a loss to account for its upspringing in bosoms as restless, by nature, as their own ; and for its stability and triumphant endurance, amidst sufferings and alarms which would toss their own breasts with tumultuous agitation. It passes the understanding of the wise and prudent of this world ; for it is engendered by a process, and sustained by a power, which are not dreamt of in their philosophy. It passes the understanding of the bold and resolute of this world ; for it dwells alike in the bosoms of the weak and timid, and of the valorous and strong-minded : and its seat is deepest,—its reign most absolute and undisturbed, in the hearts of those who are most conscious of their own helplessness,—most thoroughly convinced that their own natural powers, however vigorous,—their own natural fortitude, however strong, must be utterly insufficient to sustain them, amidst the temptations to which they are exposed. But, more than all this, it passes the understanding even of those who possess it. It springs up in their breasts through the influence of that Spirit whose operations are secret and inexplicable ;—whose presence and working are discernible only in their results ;

and who is like "the wind that bloweth whither it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth." It is a peace that is founded on this inscrutible mystery, "God manifest in the flesh,"—the Holy One made sin for us. It is a peace which has its source in that "love of Christ which passeth knowledge." It is a peace which results from this wondrous fact,—a fact which will be the wonder of men and angels throughout eternity,—that creatures so vile and guilty as we, have been loved by the Holy God; acquitted by the Judge of the whole earth; received into communion with Him who cannot look upon iniquity; taken into the protection and favour of that Almighty Monarch against whom we had so deeply revolted; liberated from the crushing bondage of Satan; delivered from the dominion of our own deep-seated corruptions; made heirs of immortal bliss and glory;—and all this without the violation of God's justice, because in consequence of an expiation whose value is incalculable,—the payment of a ransom of inestimable worth.

And, thus passing comprehension in its nature and origin, this peace in the same degree passeth all understanding in its preciousness. Its value no created intellect can compute. And as surely as the wealth of worlds could not purchase it, the possession of a universe could not compensate for its loss. Its depth is unfathomable. Its sweetness palls not when all creature comforts lose their power to please. It abides in the heart of the believer throughout all the changes and trials of time, and throughout the endless ages of Eternity. His "peace is like a river," swelling and expanding as it

flows, till it merges its glad waters in the deep Ocean of everlasting bliss.

Yet, while we remember and acknowledge that this peace of God passeth all understanding in respect of its marvellous origin, the exquisite combination of its elements, and the inestimable privilege of its enjoyment; we must guard against the idea that there is any thing unintelligable to a spiritual mind, in the scriptural account of its production;—any thing visionary or fanciful in the assurances on which it is based;—any thing airy or unsubstantial in its character; or any thing too lofty or seraphic in its nature, to be aimed at by the humblest Christian, in this busy and distracting world. The source from whence it flows *is* deep and mysterious; but there is nothing inexplicable in the operation, or unaccountable in the efficacy, of the means by which this peace is engendered. That such provision should have been made for its production and maintainance in the breasts of fallen men, must indeed be amazing even to the highest intelligences that surround the throne of God. But that, such provision having been made, this peace should be deep and abiding, can be no cause of wonder even to the weakest believer. Rather is it wonderful that, when so sure and ample a foundation has been laid for this peace, it should be so fluctuating and so imperfect. It *is* marvellous that the Son of God should have given Himself for us, that we, who were enemies, might be reconciled to God by His death. But it is not marvellous that, being justified by faith we should have peace with God; or that, having peace with God we should have peace in our own consciences, and tranquillity in our own minds. It *is* wonderful that

the Son of the Highest should have undertaken the office of mediator between God and men; and that, amid the glories of His Father's courts He should still retain our nature, and acknowledge Himself as our covenant Head, —our Brother and Protector. But it is not wonderful, that, having such an High Priest, who can be touched with the feeling of all our infirmities,—having such a Head exalted to reign over all things for the good of the Church, our confidence should be strong that all that concerns us shall be ordered wisely, and tenderly, and well. It *is* marvellous that the Holy Spirit should come down to dwell in the breasts of polluted men; to comfort and sustain, to enlighten and sanctify them. But surely it is not wonderful that, having such a Comforter dwelling with them, they should be kept in peace, even amidst all the disquieting influences that assail them from without.

And as the peace of God is based on a foundation which is obviously stable and sufficient, so also is it substantial and fruitful in its nature; practical and purifying in its influence. It is no ethereal and evanescent rapture,—no romantic afflatus, that wafts the soul away from the sphere of realities, to a cloud-land of dreams, and then, subsiding, sets it down on the cold mountain-top of barren speculation; or leaves it to fall back again into the mire of carnality. It is a calm, sustained, ever buoyant impulse, bearing on the rejoicing soul in a steady, unswerving progress, toward the goal of a promised, and longed-for perfection. "The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall *keep* your hearts*

* The word here used is a military term, and is the same (with a

and minds, by Christ Jesus:" not merely will it preserve them in quietness, but it will defend them from every assault, and protect them from every injury, in whatever way, and from whatever quarter they may be threatened. From all that would war against the soul to its destruction or detriment, it is guarded by this peace of God. Against all such dangers it is kept as with a garrison; and the invincible Commander of that garrison is Jesus Christ, "the king of glory; the Lord, strong and mighty; the Lord mighty in battle;" whose favour compasses about His people as with a shield. The assurance is here given that the peace of God is adequate to keep the *heart* amidst all the temptations and discouragements to which it can be exposed; and to guard the *mind* against all unbelieving doubts, against all the fiery darts of Satan, and all the sceptical insinuations of a "philosophy" falsely so called.

In the first place, it will keep the *heart*. It will preserve us from giving way either to those seductions, or to those terrors, which would lead us astray, and hinder us in our Christian course. It will keep us from yielding to the allurements of the world, to the solicitations of sense and the snares of sin. It leaves no craving void, for the filling of which we can be tempted to have recourse to unhallowed pleasures, or carnal indulgences. It supplies us with all that is necessary for the repose of our souls; and removes that restlessness and vacuity, which lead the men of this world to pursue every phantom, to catch at every glittering bauble, to

change of tense) as that employed in 2 Cor. xi. 32, where it is rendered "kept with a garrison."

grasp at every tempting bait, which the Arch-deceiver presents to them, and which promises entertainment to their fancy, or gratification to their sensual appetites. Having this peace, we have that which is infinitely greater and better than the world can offer to us. And, feeling that there can be no congruity or consistency between the enjoyment of this peace and the pleasures of sin, we must be ready at once to reject those allurements which would tempt us forth from that haven of rest,—that place of security and satisfaction, which we have found.

Equally powerless will be the *terrors* of this world to drive us from the path of duty, if this "peace of God rules in our hearts," and exercises there its rightful influence. Conscious of the protection of the Almighty, why should we fear what man can do to us? Having been delivered by God from eternal destruction,—redeemed at such a price from everlasting condemnation and woe, why should we fear that the God of our salvation will permit any real evil to befal us,—even though, for our profit and for His glory, He should suffer us to be tried in the furnace of affliction, or searched and sifted by the blasts of persecution?

Again, this peace of God keeps the *mind* of the believer. It prevents him from being perplexed or overcome by the insinuations of the Tempter against the goodness, the faithfulness, the wisdom, and justice of God. It preserves us from being unsettled and distracted by sceptical objections to the truth of our religion,—to the credibility of those wondrous things which have been revealed, and those precious promises which have been given to us. It supplies us with a witness in ourselves

to the love, the faithfulness, and the power of God. It affords to us indisputable testimony to the truth of God's word. For it is itself the fulfilment of those promises in which we have trusted: it is the accomplishment of those declarations which we have acted on as true. It is in itself a standing proof that God is both able and willing to accomplish all that He has undertaken to do for His people.

Peace, we have said, is linked with Joy. Both are to be found "in believing." Peace is the bud; joy is the blossom. Beneath the genial beams of the Sun of Righteousness, peace expands and effloresces into joy. Peace is still and pensive; joy is lively and energetic. Peace "keeps the heart and mind" for the Lord; Joy sallies out to publish His praises, and to show how great things He has done for the soul. Peace dwells within, and makes grave, sweet melody in the heart: joy sparkles in the eyes, and rushes to the lips, and gushes forth in rapturous singing. But the peace and the joy which are the fruits of the Spirit and which spring from faith, are each so perfect in their kind, that they baffle all attempts either to comprehend or to express them. If we would indicate their excellence, it must be by showing not how they *fill up*, but how they *overflow* the vessel by which we try to measure them. The Peace of God, which pervades the whole heart and mind, finds the entire being of man too strait for it; it is a blessing which there is not room enough to receive: our conceptions cannot grasp it; our moral capacities cannot take it all in; it "passeth all *understanding*." And the joy which seeks utterance through the lips,—which craves expression

adequate to its intensity, and longs to pour itself forth, that it may win the sons of sorrow to Him from whom it flows,—that "joy of the Lord" is a "joy that is *unspeakable*." When "our heart is glad and our glory rejoiceth," we may "praise the Lord with joyful lips," and stir up "all that is within us to bless His holy name;" but "Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? who can shew forth all His praise?"

Yet, as the peace which is so inestimable is to be sought and prized for its *sustaining*, as well as for its *soothing* influence; so the joy which is so ineffable is to be cherished for its *invigorating*, as well as for its *enlivening* power. "Mourn not nor weep," said Nehemiah and Ezra, to those who laboured in rebuilding the city and temple of Jerusalem; "neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the Lord is your strength." Whatever cause of lamentation we may have, it is not good that we "should be swallowed up with over-much sorrow;" and that our eyes should be blinded by tears, or diverted, by absorbing grief, from the grounds of consolation and rejoicing which are presented to us in the promises and provisions of God's grace. It is true that "godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of:" it is true that "the sacrifices of the Lord are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart God will not despise." But the wounding of the heart is not the ultimate object of God's dealings with His children. Nor can the convinced sinner be prepared to give himself heartily, strenuously, and perseveringly to the service of the Lord, until he has received "the oil of joy for mourning," and "the bones which have been broken have been made to rejoice." Therefore the children of Zion are exhorted to

"be joyful in their King;"—to "rejoice and be glad in His salvation;"—to accept with cheerfulness the tokens of divine favour, which, notwithstanding their unworthiness, have been bestowed upon them.

To this spirit of exulting gladness, the children of God are incited, not merely for the comfort, but for the health and welfare of their souls;—not merely that they may enjoy, but that they may be fitted to serve and glorify, the Lord. For, they who "joy in God's strength"* will find strength in His joy. If sorrow is needful to subdue and to chasten, joy is needful to stimulate and to strengthen. And while, for the true welfare of the soul, godly sorrow is better far than the joy of the world, even godly sorrow will not fit the soul for the struggles and contests, the labours and efforts, to which the children of God are called, unless it issue in the joy of the Lord. Sorrow may be needful to strip us of those encumbering weights which would hinder us in the Christian race: joy alone can invigorate us for running that race. Amidst the gloom of sorrow the trees of righteousness may strike their roots deep into the soil; their branches may acquire a more compact and hardy solidity; and the showers that descend from the clouds which overshadow them may make provision for their future growth and fruitfulness. But it is the sunshine of joy alone that can develop them in all their fair proportions, and clothe them with luxuriant verdure, and call forth their buds, and expand their fragrant bloom, and mature their refreshing fruit.

"Tears make the harvest of the heart to grow:"

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* Psalm xxi. 1.

but it is by joy that the harvest must be ripened, and "the full corn in the ear" brought to perfection.

Accordingly, throughout Scripture the people of God are called to rejoice in Him, as their all-sufficient portion, and their Almighty Protector. "Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous, and shout for joy all ye that are upright in heart." "Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee; and let them that love thy salvation say continually, The Lord be magnified." "Let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice: let them ever shout for joy because thou defendest them: let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee." Such are the strains in which the Psalmist ever and anon breaks forth. Thus also speak the Prophets. "Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains: for the Lord hath comforted His people."* "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold thy King cometh unto thee."† "Be glad, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God."‡ The "Man of Sorrows" Himself exorted His disciples to cherish that joy which He came to purchase for them at the expense of His own anguish. "Rejoice," He said, "and be exceeding glad." "These things have I spoken unto you that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." And the apostles of the Lamb caught up the same language. "Rejoice evermore." "Rejoice in the Lord alway; and again I say rejoice." "These things write we unto you that your joy might be full."

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* Isaiah xlix. 13. † Zech. ix. 9. ‡ Joel ii. 23.

Nor is it without ample ground and sufficient warrant that believers are thus called on to rejoice. It is no incitement to a vain, transient, and empty mirthfulness that is thus addressed to them. They are not tantalized and mocked by an exhortation to gladness while no source of joy is presented to them, but such as eludes their grasp, or cheats and disappoints them when tasted. The invitations to joyfulness which the *world* holds out are, indeed, thus delusive and ensnaring. The joys which the world offers are, at best, such as can only be tasted while thought is altogether banished, or is engrossed with objects which distract the mind of the sinner from his condition as a guilty, depraved, yet responsible being. And the pleasures thus recklessly grasped,—the heedless gaiety, or more serious trifling, thus blindly pursued, is not only exposed to be broken in upon and embittered by the realities of life, and the flashing thoughts of eternity; but, if not exchanged for penitence and humiliation during this season of grace, it must, ere long, be exchanged for unmitigated woe, and the blackness of darkness for ever. Far different is the joy which the believer is encouraged to cherish. It is a joy which is not only consistent with the full consciousness of his condition in the sight of God; but which flows from the realization of the state into which he has been brought, and the destiny that awaits him. It is a joy that proceeds from the contemplation of all that God is,—of all that God has done, and has undertaken to do for His people. It is a joy that derives enhancement from the view, not only of all that is bright and prosperous, but of all that is dark and seemingly adverse, in the experience and prospects of the Christian

pilgrim. For, the deeper the gloom to the eye of sense and sight, the brighter does the light appear which, to the eye of faith, irradiates and dispels that gloom. It is a joy which not only survives all the trials and disappointments of life, and all those deep afflictions which are peculiar to God's children, but which comes forth from these sorrows exhilarated, renovated, and exulting. It is a joy which increases with every increase in the Christian's faith, and grows as he grows in knowledge, and matures in experience. It is a joy which strengthens him for duty; which prepares him for trial; which sustains him, by the foretaste which it gives of heavenly bliss. It is, in a word, the joy of the Lord;—a joy which the Lord only could bestow; a joy which it is worthy of Him to impart, and worthy of immortal souls to cherish.

If we give the precedence among the progeny of Faith to Peace and Joy, it is not as implying that, in the order of excellence, these are more noble than Love, nor is it as designing to indicate that, in the order of time, peace must be perfect, or joy must be full, before love can spring up. On the contrary, it is perfect love that must cast out that fear which hath torment, and which disturbs the peace of the soul; and it is when we love Christ whom we have not seen, that "believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable." "They who love God's name" will "be joyful in Him." But still it is true that before love can be engendered, the foundation of our peace must be discerned, and the elements of peace and joy must be diffused in our hearts. While we look upon God as an enemy,—while we see all His attributes

arrayed against us, we cannot give our heart to Him, we cannot yield to Him that service of love with which alone He can be pleased, and which alone can be light and pleasant to ourselves. But when our eyes have been opened to see God as He is in the face of Jesus Christ,—a God of love; when we have been "reconciled to God by the death of His Son;" when "we joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement,"—when we thus look upon God as a Father and a friend, we cannot but love Him; we cannot but delight in the doing of His will; we cannot but love all mankind as His creatures, and regard with a special and a complacent love those who are renewed after His image.

Therefore it is that we here link that love by which faith works, with that gratitude which faith produces. We mean not to say that these two affections are co-extensive in their scope and object. The gratitude to which we allude is excited by the *benefits* received from God, and it is exercised directly and exclusively towards God; whereas the love to which we refer, springs from the spiritual and experimental knowledge of all that God *is* in Christ; and it flows forth, not only toward each of the persons in the Godhead, but toward all the family of God;—yea, (as a love of benevolence and compassion) toward the whole human race. But this love and this gratitude are essentially connected with each other, inasmuch as, before the love can be actually felt, the grounds of gratitude must be realized and appreciated. God has, indeed, an eternal and indefeasible claim to our love, independently of any benefits which we personally receive from Him; but it is only

when we perceive what He has done for us, while we were yet enemies, that the "cold obstruction" which hinders the forthgoing of our love towards Him can be removed, and we can practically concede His rightful claim to the devotion of our whole hearts. Then, too, alone it is that we can "love those that are begotten of Him," and "by love serve one another." "We love Him because He hath first loved us." Being forgiven much we love much: and seeing that "God so loved us," we feel that "we ought also to love one another."

It is then by "love in the Spirit,"—love, as including gratitude, and in part engendered by it, but stretching far beyond it, that faith works for the strengthening of the soul. "Love is of God," and it is by love, as a divine principle, that we are to be stimulated and sustained in the discharge of all our duties toward God and toward our fellow creatures. Love is the source: love is the stream by which this otherwise barren earth is cheered and fertilized: love is the sap by which the trees of righteousness, planted by the rivers of waters, are made to grow and flourish, and bring forth fruit in their season. From the root to the topmost bough one vitalizing element must pervade the whole plant,—flowing continually from the great centre of life, to the outermost branch—to the feeblest twig. That great and essential element is love. God, who is the great source of all, is love: the Son, whom He hath sent forth from His bosom, is love; and it is love reigning in our bosoms that must enable us to do the will of Him in whom we live.

This love is a fruit of the Spirit; and for its production the Spirit must Himself dwell in our hearts. But

while He works there by His own direct influence, He also operates through the medium of that record which He hath Himself inspired, of the wondrous grace of God in Christ Jesus. He takes of the things of Christ and shews them to us. He makes us "know and believe the love which God hath to us." And in two ways the love displayed by Christ, tends, when thus believed in, to generate a corresponding love in us toward Him, towards each other, and towards all men.

In the first place, it so acts by exhibiting a model of pure, disinterested, glowing, and constant love;—a love which many waters could not quench; which much coldness and ingratitude could not alienate; which could carry Him through sufferings, the sorest and most appalling, that they who were its objects might be freed from danger and from woe; and which could induce Him willingly to make sacrifices the most inconceivable, that they might be rich and happy to Eternity. "By this we know love, that He laid down His life for us."* By this we know what love is, as it dwells in perfection in the bosom of Immanuel. By this our whole conceptions of love are elevated and enlarged. By this a new and a lofty standard of love is set before us, infinitely higher than we could of ourselves have imagined. From this we learn what love can do,—how strong and stedfast it is,—how much it can endure in behalf of its objects,—to what sacrifices and labours and efforts it can prompt for the promotion of their welfare.

* 1 John iii. 16. Our translations supply the words "of God;"—"Hereby perceive we the love *of God*:" but the addition is uncalled for, and obscures the peculiar sentiment so forcibly expressed in the original.

But there is another method in which the love of Christ tends to promote love in His people; and that is through the direct influence exerted on their hearts by the experience of His love. This is an influence which it is more difficult to describe, and which is less capable of being appreciated by those who are yet strangers to its power, than the force of example, or of authoritative command. But in truth it is more effectual than either. There is a subduing, melting, purifying influence in the warm beams of love, when they fall directly even upon the hardest heart, which will often effect a change in it that could never have been induced by the most glowing description of that love, or by the most cogent arguments in support of the claims of those to whom love is due. "Light is sweet, and it is a pleasant thing for the eyes to behold the sun:" but it is not so much by *beholding* as by *feeling* the genial emanations that flow from the sun that we are to be cheered; and it is thus only that we can be warmed and invigorated. In vain would the clearest radiance pour from the bright source of day upon the ice-bound stream, did not his beams search deep into the glassy bosom of the imprisoned waters, and set free their rejoicing current, to burst away, making glad music, and ministering refreshment to the trees that grow by their banks. Even so, it is the feeling that we, so unworthy, so cold, so destitute of love in ourselves, have been loved by our compassionate Redeemer,—loved with so marvellous a love,—it is this, more than the mere announcement of the scheme of grace which His love has devised and carried out at such an expense of toil and suffering,—it is this that melts and opens our frozen souls; it is this that restores us to a glorious liberty;

it is this that enlarges our hearts, and makes us to run and to rejoice in the light of the Lord, glad and glowing and grateful: it is this that prepares us to embrace all around us, and fills us with earnest desires to impart to others a share in the precious gift bestowed on us, and to make them partakers in our own joy: it is this that makes all those separate streams which have experienced in common the same blessed influence, to flow together, and raise one united and harmonious song of thanksgiving and praise.

How often may we see examples of this direct power of love, even when it flows from a human breast, and exhibits itself in such a way as is competent to mere man! He who has never known what it is to be loved, —whatever he may have heard of that blessedness as others have felt it,—remains hard and cold and callous of heart; and only wraps himself up in more sullen insensibility, and more gloomy misanthrophy, the more he hears of the joy which others find in that which is denied to him,—of which he can form no right conception, and which he looks upon as either visionary in itself, or, at least, beyond the reach of his enjoyment. But let such an one begin really to feel and to know that there are those who for him, too, can feel sincere interest, unfeigned affection, self-denying, self-sacrificing love,—then he awakens to a consciousness that the blessedness which others speak of is no dream: he cannot choose but love as he has been loved: he cannot but look with a kindlier eye on all around him: he cannot but recognise and value that delightful bond by which God has designed that all His creatures should be united. He who knows assuredly that in his own heart there is a channel

in which—though it had been long dry—the stream of love was intended to flow: he can no longer doubt that in the coldest and sternest bosom there is a similar provision for the flow of that rejoicing stream; and he longs to pour through every heart a portion of those glad waters which he feels welling up within himself: he longs to mingle the tide of his own emotions with kindred currents; and to infuse a quickening and stimulating influence where such has never been felt before, that the dry ground may be turned into water-springs.

But if such be the effects which flow from the love of a fellow-creature, what must be the influence of the Saviour's love, in those who really believe that they have been the objects of a love so wonderful and so unmerited? For who has loved, or can love, like Him? Who can be so unworthy of the love of their fellow-men as we have been of the love of Christ? Who has ever given, or could give, such tokens of love as He has given to us?

On this inviting and inexhaustible theme we cannot here enlarge. We must put a restraint upon ourselves, and not attempt to speak that which is "unspeakable." Suffice it, for the purpose of indicating the practical influence of Christ's love, to say, that, as a love of *compassion*, it demands and evokes our gratitude; it constrains us to the willing devotion of ourselves to Him who died for us; it teaches and inclines us to do good to all,—even to the unthankful and the obdurate;—to love one another as we have been loved by Him; to be kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven us: and, as a love of *complacency*, it dignifies and elevates,

while it cheers and sustains us; it calls upon us to walk worthy of Him who hath so distinguished us; and to be at once jealous over ourselves and zealous for Christ's cause, that we may "continue in His love," and afford pleasure to Him who "knows our works."

It was when He saw no good thing in us,—nothing but loathsome vileness and corruption, that He sought and saved us; it was when we were enemies that He stretched out the arms of His mercy toward us, and sent the Holy Spirit to draw us to Himself, and bestowed on us the adoption of children, and gave us a place in His house. But when, having thus received us to Himself, and called us to dwell in His presence, He sees us, by the inward working of the Spirit and the teachings of His word, growing more and more in holiness, and delighting in the doing of His will,—when He sees us looking with confidence to Him; then He regards us not only with the love of pity and of mercy, but with the love of complacence and approbation,—with a holy and satisfied delight in every feature of resemblance to Himself which He discerns in us. And as this complacence increases with every advance which we make in purity, it is of necessity checked and diminished by every appearance of declension or remissness on our part, —by every thing that defaces His renewed image in our souls. Surely, then, we cannot but reckon it our highest privilege to be partakers of a love so unsearchable! Surely we cannot but strive to give practical evidence of our gratitude for such a marvellous exhibition of kindness and of grace! Surely we cannot but earnestly seek to know how we may maintain in all its strength a bond of union so sacred and endearing! Surely we cannot but

guard, as a jewel of incalculable value, this love which hath been bestowed on us! And, if it be the desire of Jesus that, by a consistent and holy walk, we should "continue in His love," surely *we* must eagerly desire that nothing should ever mar our enjoyment of His favour and His smile,—that nothing should for a moment separate between Him and us, or interfere with our communion with Him!

How glorious, how delightful is the assurance that the blessed Son of God—He to whom is committed all power in Heaven and on Earth, is constantly looking down with anxious interest upon each one of His people,—rejoicing with them in all their joy,—feeling for them in all their afflictions,—sympathizing with them in all their difficulties,—sending seasonable supply for all their wants,—ministering comfort suited to all their sorrows, and strengthening influence for every season of trial! How blessed to know that every new accession of holiness, every new triumph over sin, every new beam of heavenly light, by which we are gladdened, sends a new thrill of joy through the loving bosom of our exalted Redeemer;—that with renewed satisfaction He contemplates all the fruit of the travail of His soul which is formed and ripened in our hearts! Oh! then, if we are indeed grateful for what He has done and suffered for us, with what intensity of desire should we strive that daily and continually we may be the honoured instruments of contributing to His joy! With what unceasing watchfulness should we guard every inlet of our hearts, that the enemy of our souls and of our Lord may gain no access there! How constantly should we be on the alert, that our fruitfulness may never be marred by

those "foxes, those little foxes that spoil the vines!" How vigilantly should we mark, and strive to counteract, all the wiles of that Tempter who seeks to intrude upon us even in those days of Heaven which we enjoy upon Earth, and to damp our affections, and distract our thoughts, in those seasons of most precious privilege, and most blessed communion with our Lord, when He comes in to sup with us and we with Him! Ah! let us be assured that it is only when the Saviour has joy in us that we can have real or lasting joy in ourselves. It is only those hours in which we walk closely with Him, and renounce every other source of satisfaction, that will leave no sting behind. It is only when we give ourselves up entirely to Christ that we can fully enjoy Him as our portion. It is just in proportion to the abundance in which we draw out of His fulness that the cup of our bliss is filled. It is only when He is our all in all that our joy can be full, and our souls can be strong and invincible.

Intimately associated with Love and Gratitude, are Hope and Confidence. And here we speak of Confidence, not as equivalent to that simple reliance on Christ which is of the essence of saving Faith; but rather as implying that bold and firm grasp with which the soul, amidst all danger and trial, "lays hold on eternal life," assured that no adversary shall prevail against it to its destruction. In this sense Confidence is the fruit of Faith. It is the open and hardy development, amidst the keen blasts of opposition and temptation, of that robust and vigorous life which is derived from Faith. Faith looks directly to Christ. Confidence looks around on the

enemies of the souls salvation, and bids defiance to them all. Faith says "I know in whom I have believed:" Confidence takes up the strain, and makes triumphant application of this belief; "I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day;" therefore, though in His "cause I suffer these things, nevertheless I am not ashamed."* Faith says "There is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus:" Confidence flings abroad the challenge "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again;" "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or the sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us."

And this Confidence is closely connected with Hope. Both spring from Faith; both derive their power and their strengthening influence from the contemplation of what God is in Christ Jesus: but Hope looks more directly to those promises which have relation to the *future;* while Confidence has respect to the assurances given regarding the *present.* Hope anticipates the triumphant issue: Confidence rejoices in the provision made for meeting the exigencies of a time of conflict, and insuring complete victory in the end. Thus Hope and Confidence mutually sustain each other. On the one hand, the certainty of a prosperous result sustains our heart amidst danger and trial, and strengthens our

* 2 Tim. i. 12.

conviction that the means now provided by God for our support *must* be sufficient, however formidable the perils to which we are exposed, and however impalpable to the eye of sense be the resources on which we are called to lean. Amidst all the "fightings without and fears within" that assail us, we can hear a voice saying, "Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom:" and if an incorruptible inheritance is reserved *for us* in heaven, we cannot doubt that we shall be preserved *for it* amidst all the snares and obstacles that beset our path in this earthly pilgrimage. On the other hand, the contemplation of that abundant grace which is so sufficient for us now, strengthens our assurance of ultimate deliverance from all evil, and entrance into eternal bliss: for "if God be for us who can be against us," to hinder the accomplishment of His purposes concerning us! He who gives grace now, will give glory hereafter. If now we are "continually with Him," and if He "holds us by our right hand," we know assuredly that we shall be with Him for evermore and shall be made to sit with Christ at His right hand. If now He "guides us with His counsel He will afterwards receive us to glory."

"Through much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom of God." Manifold are the ways in which the Lord's people may be sorely tried. Their affections may be wounded, their reputation may be assailed, and their character may be blackened. Their hearts may be torn by bereavement. Their bodies may be wasted by disease, or racked with pain. Their projects may be thwarted. Their hopes and prospects, as regards all that is temporal, may be blighted. Their gourds may

wither. The streams by which they hoped to be refreshed may fail, and prove but deceitful brooks. It may be that their experience is dark and perplexing to the eye of reason, and they themselves know not how their deliverance is to be accomplished. It may be that the wisest of human counsellors can devise for them no way of escape. The horizon around them may be growing blacker and blacker. Their path may seem to be becoming ever more intricate, and more thorny, as they advance. No outlet from trouble may appear, wherever their eyes are directed. Temptations may seem so thickening upon them;—their spiritual enemies may rage so horribly against them, and spread for them snares so insidious, that it may seem impossible that they should much longer stand. But amidst all these dangers the believer is upheld by the confidence that "*the Lord knoweth* how to deliver the godly out of temptations." He can say "I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised; so shall I be saved from mine enemies." "Amidst all the waves and the billows that go over him" he can exclaim, "Yet the Lord will command His loving kindness in the day-time, and in the night His song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life. Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance and my God." Thus he "holds fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end."

Love, as well as Faith, contributes to the support of Confidence: for if we know the love that God hath to us, and in any adequate measure return that love, we

can never harbour the suspicion—even when His dealings with us are most mysterious—that He is really regardless of our welfare, or will leave us a prey to the foes that surround us, and the dangers by which we are menaced. And faith and love co-operate with Hope, to energize the soul, and incite it to persevering diligence in the work of the Lord. Love impels us to exertion, through the hope that we shall thus more fully enjoy, and more efficiently glorify, Him who hath loved us. Gratitude urges us to activity, through the hope that thus we shall promote the cause of our gracious benefactor, and win His approving smile. The Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father, gives a sweetness and a sustaining power to the hope of an eternal abode in our Father's house; and through that hope it keeps our heart from being troubled and distracted by oppressing cares or griefs. Faith purifies the heart through the hope of seeing Christ as He is,—and being made altogether like to Him. And thus (seeing that "the pure in heart alone shall see God," and he only "who endureth to the end shall be saved") hope is fitly represented as discharging a most important office in the working out of our complete and final salvation from all the power and all the consequences of sin. Not only is it true that believers are saved *in* hope, and triumph in anticipation over all that would oppose their eternal salvation; but it is true, in a peculiarly interesting sense, that they are saved *by* hope; inasmuch as through its influence they are strengthened to endure temptation,—to resist whatever would drive them back or turn them aside from the Christian course, and to remain faithful unto death, that they may obtain the crown of life.

Thus already we anticipate the appearance of Faith's latest born but not least useful and honoured children, —Zeal and Patience;—Zeal, a vigorous and valiant youth, "ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance and goodly to look to;"—Patience, sedate, composed, and meek, but wearing an aspect of calm determination and unflinching fortitude: Zeal, prepared for working and warring; Patience, for watching and waiting.

Where Faith lifts up her starry banners;—where Peace and Joy lead the happy train who "have a song, as in the night, when a holy solemnity is kept; and gladness of heart, as when one goeth with a pipe to come into the mountain of the Lord, the Mighty One of Israel;"*—where Love and Gratitude advance through the wilderness, leaning on the Beloved, and pouring out strains of adoring praise to Him;—where Hope with eagle eye scans the eternal glories, and Confidence sets her face stedfastly to "pass through fire and through water," assured that soon she shall be "brought out into a wealthy place;"†—there Zeal and Patience cannot be absent. When we see this bright procession passing by, we may know how the rear is to be brought up. Already we may hear the shrill clarion of Zeal: already the soft, sweet melody that flows without intermission from the lips of Patience, falls soothingly on our ear. And here it is that Faith and Patience are in their right place, and occupy their natural position in relation to the other graces which we have been contemplating: here it is that they will abide, and not "pass away, like the untimely birth of a woman."

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* Isaiah xxx. 29. † Psalm lxvi. 12.

The Zeal that "makes haste" to outstrip Faith;—the Zeal that rushes forward, brisk and bustling, before the Peace of God has taken possession of the soul, or the Joy of the Lord has come to give it strength;—the Zeal that is not preceded by Love and prompted by Gratitude;—the Zeal that runs before Hope, and leaves Confidence behind;—such a Zeal is false and spurious, and will soon dwindle and decay, or run to seed, and bring no fruit to perfection. Being self-originated, self-confident, and self-glorifying, it has no blessing resting upon it and no "blessing in it." Having no participation in the root and fatness of the True Vine, it can bring forth only wild grapes. "It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing:" and the zeal that is prompted by faith and love, cannot be too ardent and glowing. But it is very possible to be "zealously affected yet not well." The zeal that springs from an earthly source is "strange fire," which cannot be acceptable to God; and to those who appear before Him with censers kindled by it, the stern reproof is addressed, "Who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; your incense is an abomination unto me."

In like manner the Patience which results from faith, and which is promoted by peace and love and hope, is an inestimable blessing. It conserves and consummates all other attainments; so that if "Patience have her perfect work, we shall be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." It is the great support of Perseverance, and sustains the soul in labouring to enter into the rest that remaineth. It is "by faith and patience that we shall inherit the promises." "To them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory and honour and immortality,

eternal life" shall be given. But the patience that proceeds from mere insensibility,—from stoical apathy or reckless hardihood, has no promise attached to it, and no blessedness in it. They who "despise the chastening of the Lord" are in yet greater danger than they who "faint when they are rebuked of Him:" and, however stout-hearted now, "can their heart endure or their hands be strong, in the day that God shall deal with them?"

It is, then, through Faith, as working by love, and generating hope and joy, that we are to be fired with true zeal, and to "possess our souls in patience." For how can we believe in the marvellous love with which God hath loved us;—how can we appreciate the glory of His nature and the excellence of His character; how can we enjoy the gifts of His grace, and the foretastes of His eternal glory; yet not be filled with earnest desire to glorify His name, to advance His cause, and to bring others into a participation in that which we have found to be so precious and so satisfying? How can we apprehend aright the power, the wisdom, and the love of God, as our Shepherd, our Protector, our unwearied Benefactor, yet not rest in calm assurance under His guardianship? How can we faint or repine when dangers threaten us, or sufferings come upon us, which, we know, can work us no real harm, but shall be made to advance our own best interests, and to promote the cause of Him whom we love?

Thus does Faith engender all those feelings, and cultivate all those graces, which minister to the strength of the soul. Just in proportion to the vividness and the simplicity of his faith, the believer's peace will be un-

ruffled, and his joy will be deep; his love will be ardent, and his gratitude lively. Just as faith is increased, hope will brighten, and confidence will wax bold; zeal will become fervent, and patience will become perfect in long-suffering. And just in proportion to the serenity of the believer's peace, and the warmth of his love and gratitude, will he be active and vigorous in doing the Lord's work. Just as hope and joy abound, the faculties of his soul will be elastic and energetic; his heart will be buoyant; fatigue will seem light; and danger will be scorned. "Rejoicing in hope," he will be "patient in tribulation." Hope will be his anchor in every storm, his helmet in every conflict, his stimulus in every labour. Ploughing in hope, and sowing in hope, he will plough with stedfast diligence, never dreaming of looking back; and he will sow abundantly, knowing that "in due season he shall reap if he faint not." But just in proportion as faith fails, and with it peace and love, he will flag and faint and grow weary in well-doing. Just as faith grows weak, and as with it hope and joy languish, the energies of his soul will be damped; his knees will be feeble, and his hands will hang down; labour will be a burden, and danger will appear terrible; present ease will be desired, and suffering and sacrifice will be shunned.

It is in Faith, then, with its attendant graces, that the Church is strong. And it is to the increase of faith, by the downpouring of the Holy Spirit, that we must look for that genuine revival in the Church, which will shew itself, not in sanctimoniousness, but in sanctity; not in pietism, but in piety; not in devoteeism, but in devotion; not in mere religiousness, but in "pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father;" not in the

ostentatious and noisy extravagance of zeal without knowledge, but in the calm, deep emotion of a people who know the joyful sound and are blessed,—who know their God and are strong;* not in the volcanic glare and fiery out-burst of fanaticism, but in the sunny and genial warmth of fervour; not in bustling agitation, but in busy activity; not in the fever-heat of unhealthy excitement, but in the blood-heat of glowing earnestness; not in the fitful ebulition and transient effervescence of enthusiasm, but in the buoyant energy of stedfast and consistent principle;—in a word, not in the erratic flight and expiring flash of the meteor or the wildfire, but in the steady revolution of the planet round the unchanging source of heat and light.

III. **Grace in the Life.** If we truly "live in the Spirit," we will "walk in the Spirit." If we spiritually know the grace of God as it shines in the truth, "the word of the truth of the gospel" will "bring forth fruit" in our life. If "Christ liveth in us," "the life that we now live in the flesh we will live by the faith of the Son of God." If our "heart be established with grace," "by the grace of God we will have our conversation in the world." If we love Christ, we will keep His commandments; and by this will we manifest that we are His disciples, that we bear much fruit.

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* Daniel xi. 32.

1.—Doctrine and Duty. There are two classes of professing Christians, who, in their comparative estimate of doctrine and practice, *appear* to run into opposite *extremes*, while in reality the error on both sides is one of defect, not of excess, even as regards the importance which they attach to the object of their preference. They are led astray by the low and superficial view which they take of that which they would exclusively exalt, as well as of that which they depreciate and neglect. They who maintain that practice is every thing, are invariably and necessarily at fault regarding the standard of practice which they set before them. They, on the other hand, who hold that doctrine is every thing, are as certainly insensible to the true import and rightful influence of the doctrines which they profess to value so highly. The practice which men are contented to maintain, or to aim after, while feebly impressed with the momentous significance of Christian truth, must be greatly defective in itself, and still more defective in the motives from which it springs, and by which its true character is determined. And the doctrine for which men are zealous, while indifferent to the claims of Christian duty, must be very imperfectly apprehended, and still more imperfectly appreciated and realized.

To those, then, who wish a practical religion, we would say, Abate not one jot of the claims of practice. Rather strive to understand them more fully,—to obey and to maintain them with more uncompromising zeal. But, for this end, seek to comprehend more clearly, and to feel more deeply, the importance and the power of the truth. And to those who love a doctrinal religion, we would say, Study yet more closely the doctrines of

Christianity: strive to lay hold on them with a yet firmer, a yet more comprehensive and tenacious grasp; that so you may be yet more valiant for the truth, and may be prepared more earnestly to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints, and to commend more effectually to others the religion you have embraced. But be assured that you never can rightly comprehend these doctrines, without an influence from on high, which will extend to the heart as well as to the intellect. And you never can have really received and appreciated these truths, and never can consistently proclaim and defend them, as long as you are insensible to their practical influence, and do not "obey from the heart that form of doctrine," which is the divinely appointed mould for your character as your creed.

The religion of Christ is equally distinguished by the doctrine which it unfolds and the duty which it enforces. But the doctrine and the duty do not stand apart from each other. They are intimately connected together, as the root is with the branches, the leaves, and the fruit. And just as, in the growth of plants, the sap rises from the root to the leaves, and is returned by them, wellowed and elaborated by contact with the light and air,—thus giving new strength to the root itself, and sending through the branches nurture to the clustering fruit; so, if we rightly "learn Christ," and are "taught by Him as the truth is in Jesus," that truth will flow from the mind into the heart; and there, by the grace of God, it will be made to contribute to the growth of our whole spiritual being, and to our fruitfulness in good works. The understanding and the affections will act and re-act upon each other. The truth

will sanctify; and sanctification will increase both the love of the truth and the power of apprehending it. If we be "willing to do the will of the Lord, we shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God;—as we grow in grace we shall grow in knowledge. And the result of the whole process will be manifested in that "WORK OF FAITH, AND LABOUR OF LOVE, AND PATIENCE OF HOPE," which our whole life shall exhibit and exemplify.

2.—Imitation of Christ. Be it observed, however, that it is not by the influence of a mere system of abstract truth—even when clearly apprehended and cordially embraced—that this result is to be effected. It must be by the spiritual contemplation of that living and personal Saviour whom the truth reveals;—it must be by that direct communion with Him through which the soul is transformed into His likeness. The efficacy of the gospel for the moulding of the believer's character and the regulation of his life, consists mainly in this, that it sets before him a glorious Person, who is the living embodiment at once of truth and of holiness,—the object at once of grateful confidence, and of humble, yet hopeful imitation. Christ suffered for us, "leaving us an example that we should follow His steps;" and if, by faith, we see Him working out our deliverance, at the cost of His own agonies, we cannot avert our gaze from Him as soon as we discern the foundation which He has laid for our *peace:* we will continue to fix on Him our trusting and admiring regards, as at once the source and the exemplar of *purity.* If we look and *live,* we will look and *love.* Our eyes will be rivetted, and our affections drawn forth, by the loveliness of His

character, and the holy beauties that adorned all His life on earth: and, "beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, we will be changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord."

"Forasmuch, then, as Christ has suffered for us in the flesh, let us arm ourselves likewise with the same mind." Let us seek to manifest the same stedfast resolution in fighting the good fight of faith, and laying hold on everlasting life, as He did in enduring that great fight of afflictions by which He purchased eternal life for us. While we contemplate all that He hath done and suffered for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, let us arm ourselves with the same mind which He exemplified in enduring humiliation so deep, from motives so high and holy. Let us arm ourselves against temptation, by that same hatred of *sin* which He exhibited in enduring such awful pangs, that He might deliver us from its power and pollution, as well as from its penalty. Let us arm ourselves against all that would bring dishonour on the name of Him whom we profess to serve, by that same zeal for God's glory in which Christ magnified the law and made it honourable, at the expense of such suffering and sacrifice. Let us arm ourselves against the depressing influence of pain and sorrow, by that meek submission to God's will, that unshaken trust in God's love, which Christ manifested, even when bearing the sorest afflictions, poured down upon Him directly by the hand of His Father. Let us arm ourselves against opposition and discouragement, by the same confidence of ultimate success and triumph, by which Christ Himself was sustained, when, for the joy set before Him, He endured the cross and despised the shame.

Let us strive and pray, that in every respect the mind that was in Christ may be manifested by us, in all our intercourse both with God and with men. Let us seek that, like Him, we may be ever "about our Father's business;"—that whatsoever we do, we may do all to the glory of God; and may be regulated, in all our endeavours to promote God's *glory* by an implicit regard to God's *will*, as declared by His word, or indicated by His providence. Let us seek that, like Christ, we may combine love to God, with love to men;—that, in all our bearing toward God, we may unite lowly reverence and submission with holy boldness and confidence;—that, in all our dealings with men, we may conjoin tender sympathy and considerate kindness with conscientious faithfulness and candour. Let us seek, like Him, to combine humility and meekness with earnestness and zeal;—sensitive shrinking from sin with readiness to confront and to combat it, wherever it appears. Like Him, let us draw all our joys and our consolations from above: yet, like Him, let us be willing, after our seasons of most intimate communion with the Father, and of sweetest refreshing from His presence, to go down into the world, that we may diffuse abroad the gladness put into our heart by the light of God's countenance; that we may increase, by scattering, the blessings showered upon our own heads; that we may put forth the strength with which we have been imbued, in discharging the duties of our sphere, and making sustained, and strenuous, and self-sacrificing efforts, for the good of our fellow-men.

Let us seek that thus, as Christ was, so we may be in this world. So shall we exemplify, what to many is a mystery and a paradox,—the life hidden, yet manifest;

—the life of faith amidst the things of sense and sight; —the conversation in Heaven amidst the cares and concerns of Earth. So shall we harmonize the claims of devotion with the calls of daily duty, being "diligent in business," yet "fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." So shall we shew how possible it is to be at once *godly* and *manly*;—at once pious and practical; at once prayerful and painstaking; at once contemplative and active;—sensitively alive to all spiritual influences and interests, yet healthfully alert to labour,—strong and stalwart for all the struggles of life,—robust to battle and to brave opposition,—to bear and to baffle temptation.

Let that mind be in us which was also in Him who said, "I must work the works of Him that sent me, while it is day." Let us "be stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." And let us not, on the one hand unduly contract, nor, on the other hand, unwarrantably extend, the limits of that sphere within which we may consider ourselves as engaged in the "work of the Lord." Christ was working the works of Him that sent Him, when He laboured as a carpenter with His reputed father at Nazareth, as well as when He was occupied in His public ministry. Even then He was working righteousness for us, as well as setting us an example of meek and patient submission to the will of our Heavenly Father. But it was with a distinct reference to the Father's will, and with an immediate view to the promotion of the Father's glory, that He engaged in these humble pursuits; and just as, during His public life, He felt that He had still "a baptism to be baptized with, and was straitened until it was accomplished;" so, during His earlier years, He

longed to be engaged in the more direct work of winning souls unto God; He embraced every opportunity of "inquiring in God's temple;" and of commending to others God's law, by His words, as well as by His own unreserved obedience: and it was only because the time appointed by the Father had not yet come, that He then refrained from going forth to preach the gospel of the kingdom to those sinners over whom His heart so deeply yearned.

3.—The Work of the Lord. Let us, then, learn from the example of Christ, to avoid those opposite errors into which men are apt to fall, as to the possibility of serving God, while much occupied in the duties of ordinary life.

1.—There is, in the first place, the error of those who would draw a rigid line of demarcation between those occupations which have directly to do with things sacred and those employments which have their immediate object within the sphere of things secular; and who would say, On the one side of this line lies the work of the Lord; on the other side the work of man:—on the one side, all is done for God; on the other, all is done for the world and for self:—on the one side lies the jurisdictions of God; on the other, the jurisdiction of man:—on the one side, all tribute is paid to God; on the other, tribute is paid only to Cæsar. On the supposition of such a boundary, visibly and palpably marked out, between the domain of God and the domain of the world,—between the sphere in which the work of the Lord is to be done, and that in which man is his own master and his own object, some have thought it neces-

sary to withdraw themselves altogether from the activities of social life; and to renounce all temporal pursuits, that they might give themselves entirely to those religious exercises and employments, by which alone they conceived that God could be served: while others have imagined that the call to "be *always* abounding in the work of the Lord," could not be applicable to them, seeing that they were inextricably involved in the business of this life, and *could* not devote more than a certain portion of their time to the direct worship and service of God.

But in reality there exists no such line of separation, marking out those employments, on the one hand, in which God is served and honoured, and those, on the other hand, in which He is necessarily forgotten, and from which no glory can accrue to Him. Acts, the most sacred in outward form, may become secular—yea, profane—from the spirit in which they are performed. And pursuits the most secular—we say not earthly, sensual, or essentially sinful—but pursuits the most *secular* in their outward nature and immediate object, may be consecrated by the high principles on which they are conducted; and may have "HOLINESS TO THE LORD" written upon them by the ends which they are made to subserve. There *is* a line of demarcation which the Lord draws among men; but it is not between those who serve Him in one sphere, and those who serve Him in another; but "between those who serve Him and those who serve Him *not*." His dominion extends to things secular, as well as to things sacred: and they may be his obedient subjects, who do His will from the heart, and acknowledge Him in all their ways, while occupied, to a great

extent, in temporal pursuits; as well as they whose life is devoted to sacred duties, and religious meditation. "The kingdom of God is within you," wherever you be, and whatever be your avocations, if your heart is given to God; and if, *whatsoever* you, do you do all to His glory.

2.—But while, on the one hand, we avoid the error of supposing that the work of the Lord can only be carried on continuously and diligently, by those who are exclusively occupied in religious duties and observances, we must beware of running to the opposite extreme; and supposing, that it is a matter of no moment to what extent we are engaged in the direct service of God; or that all the pursuits in which a Christian can consistently participate, are in themselves equally acceptable to God, and equally conducive to the advancement of His cause. We must beware of excusing ourselves in the neglect of those opportunities which God is giving us for engaging in His worship, and in direct efforts for the extension of His kingdom, under the plea that we may serve Him as sincerely and as effectually in the honest pursuits of business, as in the exercises of devotion, or in labours for the conversion of sinners and the edification of God's people. It is true that, in the dedication of our time, as well as of our substance, to the immediate service of God, "if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not:" and when Providence manifestly calls us to give ourselves to secular pursuits, we act as obedient servants, in cheerfully conforming to God's appointment. But our services in this sphere of labour can only be acceptable to Him, if carried on under the

influence of that love to Him, and that zeal for His glory, which will lead us eagerly to avail ourselves of every occasion on which we can turn aside, to meet with Him in His public and private ordinances;—to draw water, for the refreshment of our own souls, from the wells of salvation; and to communicate to others of that spiritual provision, which He has intrusted to us not only for our own nourishment, but for the benefit of our fellow men.

Just as the planets are kept in their appointed orbit, by the conjunct operation of two forces, one of which is ever drawing them towards the sun, while the other tends to impel them right forward through space; so the Christian is conducted onward on his appointed course, by the combined influence of two forces, neither of which must neutralize the other, though the result of their united operation is different from what either, by itself, would have produced. The one is the force of that love, which ever attracts him toward God; and inclines him to seek opportunities of meeting with God, and engaging in His immediate service. The other is that force of circumstances, which impels him onward in the pursuit of some outward and secular object. The grace and the providence of God do not thus frustrate each other; but harmoniously co-operate in the production of the desired and appointed effect. The Christian is thus made to circle continually around the great Source of light and life.

This illustration, however, must not be stretched too far. For, while the planets are kept in one uniform and unvarying path,—the force that impels them onward being ever the same; the Christian is not subjected to a force of circumstances, which keeps him ever in the

same unvarying round of labour. Seasons are given to him for a nearer approach to God, and for more direct occupation in God's service. In this respect, the Christian's course may be more fitly illustrated dy that of a stream flowing through a mountainous district. The same force of gravitation which draws the planet toward the Sun, also causes the river to descend. That force, in itself, attracts the waters towards the centre of the Earth. But the result of its operation is determined by the form of the river's channel. Sometimes, under the combined influence of these two causes, the waters rush down a steep acclivity, foaming and swirling and chafing among the rocks. Sometimes they rest in a deep and silent pool. Sometimes they wind and twist through some narrow passage between opposite cliffs. Sometimes they expand over the pebbly channel smiling in the glad sunshine, and watering the roots of the trees and flowers that grow by their banks.

Thus it will be with the consistent Christian, amidst the pursuits of business. He will ever feel the attraction that draws him toward God, as the centre of all his hopes, and the object of his supreme love. But the practical result of this attraction will be varied and modified by the circumstances in which Providence has placed him. Sometimes he will be found battling with temptation or struggling with difficulty; at other times enjoying seasons of deep and tranquil meditation: sometimes immersed in toil, and involved in the intricacies of perplexing care; at other times holding calm, undistracted communion with God, and rejoicing in the light of His countenance: sometimes winding his way amidst the routine of business; at other times expatiating

among the fields of benevolence, of philanthropy and practical piety; exercising a holy and healthful influence on all around, and fostering the trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord.

Let us, then, endeavour that every work in which we engage may be a "work of faith," inasmuch as it is pursued in the belief that that is the work to which, for the time, we are called by God; and inasmuch as we are sustained in the prosecution of it by trust in divine strength, and the expectation of a divine blessing. Let us work because the Lord of Hosts is with us,* to "work all our works in us,"† and to "bless us in all the work of our hands."‡ But let us manifest the faith in which we work, by waiting on God, that we may renew our strength, and by devoting as much of our time, and of our energies, as the providence of God permits, to that which is, in the highest sense, "the work of the Lord," —the building up of His Church, and the dissemination of His truth.

Let us seek that all our labours may be "labours of love,"—labours prompted, not by the mere selfish desire to promote our own earthly interests, but by a generous regard to the welfare of others; and especially by gratitude and love to Him who hath dealt so bountifully with us. Let love to God reign in our hearts, and sit as umpire between the various objects that claim a place in our affections, and a share in our efforts. Thus whatever is felt to be most in unison with the character and the will of God, will, of necessity, acquire a place in our

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* Haggai ii. 4. † Isaiah xxvi. 12. ‡ Deut. ii. 7.

estimation, proportioned to the strength of our love to Him. By an instinct of our new nature, we will cleave to that which is Godlike and heavenly, and sit loose to that which is earthly. And even in our temporal pursuits, we will carry with us the things of Heaven, and will never wander beyond the attraction that draws us to God's presence and calls us to His immediate service.

And let us seek that all our patience may be the "patience of hope in Christ Jesus;"—not the patience of mere apathy and torpor; but a patience which results from the hope of that glory which shall be hereafter revealed in us, and with which the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared. Hoping for that we see not, let us with patience wait for it. And let us be upheld amidst all the work and warfare to which we are now called, by the assurance that this hope shall not make us ashamed. For God Himself shall give us the victory and secure to us the everlasting reward. Suffering with Christ now, we shall reign with Him hereafter. Faithful unto death, we shall receive the crown of life. Striving now after more perfect conformity to the image of Christ, and greater fitness for His service, we shall at last be made altogether like to Him, and shall serve Him unweariedly and perfectly in a higher sphere. Following Him now in the path of humiliation, we shall follow Him on to glory; "we shall be satisfied, when we awake, with His likeness;" and shall hear from His lips the gracious welcome, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter ye into the joy of your Lord."

Enthusiasm and Faith.

"He that believeth shall not make haste."—Isa. xxviii. 16.

"O for the great archangel's trump, to spread the joyful sound,
Proclaiming freedom to the slaves in Satan's fetters bound!
O for a voice like thunder, when it peals across the deep,
To startle those that idly dream, and waken those that sleep!

"O for a pen that I might dip in liquid fire, and write
The name of Jesus o'er the skies in characters of light,
That every soul that name might know, and every eye might see,
And all of every tribe and tongue might bow to it the knee!

"O for an angel's fearless wing, to speed from clime to clime—
To warn and waken all who dwell within the coasts of time—
To spread before their view the things belonging to their peace,
And bid them think upon these things ere this their day shall cease!

"O for one hour of Moses' rod! O for Ithuriel's spear,
To touch the toads that whispering squat at many a dreaming ear,—*
To shew them in their proper shape before their victim's eyes,
And strip from off the ravening wolf the lamb's affected guise!

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* See Paradise Lost, Book iv.

"O for a rein, the whirlwind's blast in all its strength to guide,
With power to share its wild career, and on its wings to ride,
That with it I might rush and roam o'er all the dark domains,
Where yet an undisputed sway the strong man armed maintains;—

"That I might crush and sweep from earth his palaces and towers,
His prisons and his feasting halls, and soft luxurious bowers;
His haunts obscene of brutish lust, his dungeons dark and drear,
And all with which he rules the world by blandishment or fear!

"O for a seraph's harp and voice, of Jesus' love to sing,
With melody so loud and sweet that heaven and earth might ring,
Till discord hushed its grating din, and harsh polemic sounds
Gave place to strains of harmony through all the Church's bounds!"

'Twas from a young enthusiast's lips such aspirations broke,
When first from nature's sleep of death to conscious life he woke;
While, as he viewed this earthly scene from Contemplation's height,
The dark, mysterious maze of life seemed spread before his sight.

An aged man beside him stood, of aspect grave and mild;
He heard that burst of fervid zeal, and placidly he smiled;
Long years had made him feel the truths he from the Word had learned,
And calmly thus he uttered them, as to the youth he turned:—

"The ways of God are not like man's—his thoughts are not like ours;
His kingdom comes not by the might that dwells in creature powers.
Not all man's boasted wisdom, nor excellence of speech,
Nor trump nor harp of angel to the stony heart can reach.

"'Tis not the sweeping whirlwind, when it rends the rugged rock;
'Tis not the heaving earthquake, when the mountains feel its shock;
'Tis not the fire wide wasting that his glory can reveal;—
'Tis with a still small voice He bids the soul His presence feel.

"'While yet on earth, our Captain said: 'I need but breathe a prayer,
And legions of bright angels would to my beck repair.'
The hosts of heaven obey Him still, yet thus hath He decreed—
'The *reapers* are the angels, but man must sow the *seed*.'

"Go, then, and, in the strength of God, pursue with lowly mind
The labours of the vineyard in the spot to thee assigned.
Weak though thou art, yet faint not; for 'not by power nor might,
But by my Spirit, saith the Lord,' shall earth be filled with light."

PART IV.

PROGRESS AND PRESERVATION.

"Put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean. Shake thyself from the dust; arise and sit down, O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion."—Isaiah, liii. 1–2.

We have been led to enter much more fully than we at first designed upon the topics which fall under the preceding heads. It is therefore the less necessary that we should dwell, at any length, upon the thoughts suggested by the words above quoted, as to what the Church, awakened and strengthened by her Lord, is called upon to do and encouraged to expect. In fact, the progress to which the Church is here incited, and the assurances of preservation here given to her, may, to a great extent, be regarded as the development and application of those principles which we have already attempted to unfold. And while we should have had pleasure in following out the reflections to which these words might give rise, we feel that, on many accounts, the utmost brevity is demanded in what remains to be said.

Taking up, then, the expressions of the Prophet in that order in which they seem most naturally applicable to the process of revival, we find that the awakened Church is called upon, in that strength which she has put on, to assert and maintain her liberty:—

"LOOSE THYSELF FROM THE BANDS OF THY NECK, O CAPTIVE DAUGHTER OF ZION."

Release Realised. "When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream." When Cyrus, as the Lord's instrument, proclaimed to the Jews liberty to go forth from Babylon, it seemed, at first, too good news to be true. And even when the certainty of their liberation was placed beyond a doubt, many remained for a while behind, shrinking from the hardships and discouragements to which they would be exposed in returning to their own land and "building the old waste places." Thus it often is with regard to the proclamation of liberty which the Lord makes to His people. As Peter, when his chains fell from off his hands, "wist not that it was true which was done to him by the angel; but thought he saw a vision," so, at first, they believe not for joy: they can scarcely realize the certainty of their complete emancipation. And even after they have become conscious of the situation into which they have been brought, they are often slow to avail themselves fully of the privileges opened to them. For however honourable and advantageous be the position which they are called on to assume, the maintenance of it implies a sustained effort, and an exercise of self-denial for which they are not yet altogether prepared. Therefore, though awakened, and in some degree strengthened, they still require incitement to vindicate their freedom—to "stand fast in that liberty wherewith Christ hath made them free, and not to be entangled again in the yoke of bondage."

In indicating wherein the liberty consists to which

the people of Christ are called, and which it is the duty of the Church to assert and maintain, we shall make only brief mention of the first two points; because, though these are in themselves the most vital and important, they are so directly involved in what we have already had occasion to say* that it cannot be necessary here to enlarge upon them.

1. In the first place, then, it is a liberty from the curse of a broken law; and the Church is called on to assert the freedom of all her true children from the legal covenant of Sinai, which gendereth unto bondage.

2. In the second place, it is a liberty from the power and dominion of Sin; and the Church is called upon to repudiate and disallow every claim which sin may make, on the ground of long prescription or ancient conquest, to rule over her children, or to exact from them any suit or service, tribute or homage.

3. In the third place, it is a liberty in seeking and proclaiming the truth,—a liberty in respect to that relation in which the Church stands to Christ as her Prophet. A Prophet hath the Lord God raised up unto her, whom she is commanded to hear in all things, whatsoever He shall say unto her; and it is her duty to claim for herself, and for all her members, a right to bring all the doctrines and dogmas of men to the test of the truth as it is in Jesus. Whatever be the human authority by which any tenet or opinion is commended, it is the part, not only of the Church as a body, but of every individual connected with it, to "search the Scriptures whether these things be so." And, having ascertained the

* See especially Part I. and Part III. Section Second.

truth, they are not to be deterred from proclaiming it freely and maintaining it boldly. If the servants of God are commanded by men not to speak or to teach that which they are commissioned to declare in the name of Jesus, they must answer, "Whether it be right in the sight of God, to hearken unto you, more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."

4. In the fourth place, it is a liberty in the worship of God,—a liberty in respect to that relation in which the Church stands to Christ as the great "High Priest over the House of God." The liberty which Christ gives to His people in their approach to the throne of grace, has reference both to the inward feeling and to the outward form: and the simplicity of that ritual which He has prescribed for the Christian Church, corresponds to the freedom and directness of access to God which the worshippers, under the Gospel dispensation, enjoy. All believers have liberty to enter into the holiest of all by the blood of Christ, without the aid of any mediator but Him who intercedes for them above. And the time is come when neither at Jerusalem nor at Mount Gerizim shall men worship the Father; but the true worshippers shall worship Him in spirit and in truth. The Church, therefore, is called upon to resist all encroachments on her liberty by prescriptions, unauthorized by Christ, as to the time, place, or form in which her worship is to be conducted. The members of the Church are entitled to claim a liberty, not only from the burdensome ceremonial of the Mosaic dispensation, but from all human imitations of that ritual. And all attempts, whether on the part of those who are with-

out, or of those who are within, the pale of the visible Church, to lead her back into "bondage under the elements of the world," and virtually to restore those "carnal ordinances which were imposed" of old "unto the time of reformation"—all such attempts are forbidden by the nature and genius of the Gospel economy, and by the express injunctions given by inspiration of that Spirit under whose dispensation we now live. Nor is it any excuse for those who introduce such will-worship, and mar the simplicity of Gospel ordinances by outward pomp and garniture, that there are found those among the people who love to have it so, and who are ready to "turn again unto the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto they desire again to be in bondage." The danger of such adornments and appliances is not the less but the greater because, through the senses and the imagination, they lead captive the will. As it is with the sensual indulgences of the worldling, so it is with the sensuous gratifications of the worshipper: they who experience their power to please are naturally pleased with the experience of their power; and submit without a struggle to their fascinating and enervating influence. But on this very account the introduction of a gorgeous and complicated ritual, which is so apt to beguile men from the simplicity that is in Christ, and to engender in them a delusive self-satisfaction while substituting the form for the spirit of devotion, is the more to be deprecated and avoided.

5. In the fifth place it is a liberty of action,—a liberty in respect to that relation in which the Church stands to Christ as her King. The Church is called upon to vindicate for herself, and for all her children, freedom

to obey Christ alone in all spiritual things, and in all matters to do that which He enjoins, and refrain from that which He forbids. This is a liberty which is bestowed on each individual among Christ's people. It is a liberty which the Church as a body is required to maintain; and which a Church that is awakened, purified and invigorated by God's grace, will strenuously assert. A Church that is slumbering,—that is inwardly weak and inefficient, may submit to the control of the powers of this world, for the sake of that patronage and support which these powers are willing to extend to her on condition of such subjection and subserviency. But a Church that is awake to a sense of her responsibilities and privileges,—a Church that is revived and strengthened by the power of the Holy Spirit, will cast off these trammels; and will give place by subjection, no not for one hour to any authority that would usurp the place of her Head. She will say to those who would dictate to her or restrain her, "We ought to obey God rather than men." She will say to the world, when it would bribe her into silence or subjection, "We cannot sell our birthright for a mess of pottage." She will say to any power which would seduce or terrify her into conformity with the world's idolatries, "Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand. But if not, be it known unto thee, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."

Finally, and to sum up all, the liberty to which the people of Christ are called, and which the Church is required to vindicate and maintain, is a liberty of conscience—a liberty in respect to that relation in which

we stand to God, the Judge of all, with whom we have to do now, and to whom we must give an account hereafter. It is a liberty to do whatever is prompted by a conscience disburdened of the fears of guilt, enlightened by the Word of God, and rendered sensitive by the Holy Spirit. It is a liberty from that fear of man which bringeth a snare, and from the seductions of that favour of man, which is so apt to compete for influence in the heart with the life-giving favour of God. To this liberty all the true members of the Church are called. To all of them it is said, "Ye are bought with a price, be not ye servants of men." But especially is it the duty and the privilege of those who are "set for the defence of the Gospel" to cherish this spirit of independence; "for if they yet pleased men they should not be the servants of Christ." To their own Master they stand or fall. To them, if they be right-minded, it is a small matter to be judged of man's judgment. They know that "they are made manifest unto God; and they trust also they are made manifest to the consciences" of God's people. But to the petty criticisms of the uncharitable and the censorious, they feel that they can afford to give little heed, in the presence of Him who judgeth righteously. Believing in God, they desire not to receive honour from men, but seek that honour which cometh from God only. And, following that Master who was despised and rejected of men, they are not offended or cast down when they find themselves exposed to misrepresentation and obloquy from the men of the world, or even from some of the Lord's professing people. They who are led by the Spirit of God and who have the testimony of their own conscience

that they make it their object to please God and not themselves, are set free from the bondage of man-pleasing.

Having been awakened, invigorated, and delivered from debasing thraldrom, the Church is called to rise to the height of her position and privileges, and to cast off all depressing and deadening influences :—

"SHAKE THYSELF FROM THE DUST; ARISE."

Rising and Riddance. Like some captive maid who, absorbed in grief, had been sitting for a length of time on the ground, permitting the dust to accumulate unheeded on her garments, but to whom the welcome announcement of her liberation has now been brought, the Church hears the call to arise from the earth, and to shake herself from the dust; —from the dust of sordid worldliness and clinging carnality—from the dust of debilitating sorrow, of crushing despondency, of craven fear, of pusillanimous weakness, and abject depression.

The defiling dust is the dust of Earth; and the way to be rid of it is to rise to Heaven. Earthly cares are not to be thrown to the winds, but to be cast upon Him who careth for us. What time we are afraid, we must trust in God, and flee to Him as our only refuge. When sorrows weigh upon us, we must seek to bury them only in the bosom of the Saviour—we must "go and tell Jesus." When our heart is overwhelmed, the only effectual relief is to look to the Rock that is higher than we. When our soul cleaveth unto the dust, we must

cry to Him who is ready to quicken us according to His Word. If we would be delivered from the defilement of the swine-troughs, we must arise and go unto our Father. If we would be freed from the burden of oppressive grief, we must hearken to the invitation, "Be of good comfort, rise, He calleth thee." If we would have our affections loosed from the things that are on earth, it must be by setting them on the things that are above, and realizing our position as those that are risen with Christ. If we would be enabled to "lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth more easily beset us, and run with patience the race set before us," we must "look unto Jesus." It is through the hope of seeing Christ as He is, and being made like Him, that we are to purify ourselves as He is pure. And "our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory," only "*while we look*, not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen." Therefore is the call addressed to the Church, "Shake thyself from the dust;" but, for this purpose, "ARISE!" It is vain for thee to sit upon the ground, painfully picking pile after pile from thy garments: the dust will but accumulate again amidst the tedious process. But arise, and it will fall off of itself. Arise, as the startled sea-bird springs from the crest of the wave, and shakes the brine from its snowy pinions. Arise, as the uncaged linnet emerges from the smoke and dust of the city, to carol its song of liberty amidst the pure and tranquil air of heaven.

"Arise, shine, for *thy* light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon *thee*." It is a call that is addressed not only to the Church universal, but to each

separate branch of the Church, and to each individual member of it. It is a personal interest that we are encouraged to feel in the light that has risen upon us; and a personal responsibility that lies upon us to shake ourselves free of all that would hinder us from reflecting that light, and walking in it consistently and calmly. If you walk along the eastern shore, when the sun is rising above the distant wave, you will see a bright track of vivid light shooting across the ocean, and extending from the point of the horizon immediately beneath the sun, to the place where you stand; and it may seem as if it were with some special view to the illumination of that spot that the day-spring had arisen. But as you advance along the coast you perceive that the gleaming wake still follows you wherever you go—still terminating at the spot you occupy; and it may now appear as if it were to yourself personally, rather than to the place on which you stood, that the sun had been sending forth his couriers of light across the glittering way. But you meet another coming in an opposite direction, who tells you that the same phenomenon has appeared to him; and another overtakes you, who relates that, in like manner, wherever he moves, that track of light seems to point to him, and to form a direct line of communication between him and the source of day. Even so, when the Sun of Righteousness arises, it may be said to each one of us, "Arise, shine, for *thy* light is come." It is the "light of the Lord," inasmuch as it flows from Him, and indicates the path that leads to Him; but it is *thy* light, inasmuch as it comes to thee, and brings to thee the assurance that, if now thou dost hail it as thine, and prize it as con-

necting thee with Him from whom it proceeds, "the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory."

And while the glory of the Lord, which rises upon each individual member of the Church, brings with it an incitement to arise and shine in the pure light of Heaven, it necessarily brings, at the same time, an incentive to shake off the dust of sordid earthliness and of sorrowful despondency. It is the light of eternity, streaming in upon the soul, and calling it to arise and depart, because this is not its rest—it is this that effectually arouses it to shake itself from the dust of earth,—yea, even if the dust be golden. It is this that at once incites and enables us to rid ourselves resolutely of every encumbering weight, which would imperil our spiritual and eternal interests.

A vessel, sometime ago, sailed from an American port, bearing with it several hundreds of passengers, among whom were a number of gold-diggers from California, laden with the trophies of their arduous toil. At the outset of the voyage, all was promising and propitious: and the hardy miners rejoiced in the prospect of soon landing their spoils, and enjoying, in the quiet of their homes, the fruits of their labours and struggles. But ere long the darkness, gathering on the horizon, began to portend the coming storm. The breeze began to freshen, and the waves to roll higher. The desolating tempest, that had been louring afar, drew nearer; and the ship was caught in the whirling sweep of the hurricane, that tossed the ocean into tumultuous surges. At first, when the danger was only impending, and its magnitude had not been fully realized;—when as yet

the resistless force of the tempest had not been experienced; the sturdy adventurers gathered up their stores of gold, and slung them about their persons, in belts or bags, resolved that nothing should part them from their hard-won treasures. But when the vessel had sprung a leak, and the waters rushed in, extinguishing the engine-fires, and rendering the vessel powerless amidst the increasing fury of the whirlwind; the question was forced upon them with terrible emphasis, What will these bags of gold avail us, if the ship should go to wreck, and we should be cast upon the raging billows? What will it avail us to have them thus firmly bound about us? What can they do but drag us down into the dark abyss, and make our escape more impossible? Yet what can we do with them? What use can we make of them? Can we with them bribe the winds and the waves to be still? Or would it be more rational to offer them to the Captain, to the crew, or to our fellow-passengers, as a reward for saving our lives; when they themselves are as helplessly and inextricably involved in danger as we are?—Yet what *can* we make of these precious treasures,—so lately our glory and our rejoicing? Where can we leave them, with any hope that they may be hereafter of greater use to us than they are now? Shall we secure them in strong boxes? Shall we stow them away in the innermost recesses of the vessel? Can we find for them any receptacle so safe, —any depository so sacred,—that there the ruffian winds will spare them, and the ruthless billows will be unable to violate their sanctuary?—Yea, and if the devouring deep should be baulked of its prey, or constrained to

disgorge these golden hoards, what will this avail, if we ourselves are whelmed and lost in the raging ocean?

Such thoughts as these flashed through the darkness of that terrible hour upon the minds of the storm-tossed voyagers, revealing to them the worthlessness of those treasures in which they had so lately gloried. And this instinctive philosophy—reversing the operation of that philosopher's stone which turns all it touches into gold—turned into dross the gold for which they had so strenuously laboured, but which now seemed only to mock them with its glitter. They unclasped their treasure-belts; they flung from them their well filled bags and purses; and they who, but shortly before, would have been ready to contend unto blood against any who would have ventured to touch their precious stores, now scattered their gold on the deck or the cabin floor, and derisively invited who would to make it their own. One only was found so infatuated as accept the invitation; and to that one—a female connected with the vessel—the burden proved fatal: the coveted gold, bound closely round her person, carried her sheer down into the depths, in her unavailing attempt to escape with it into a boat, that lurched and rolled beside the foundering ship. All the others more wisely sought for that which might buoy them up. And amidst the struggle for life, when the vessel went down, dragging them after it into the vortex caused by its descent; or when, after a few moments that seemed like hours, they rose again to the surface; one fragment of such material as could contribute to their support amidst the dashing billows, was felt to be infinitely more precious than all the gold and gems that the earth contained. The

stately ship, that had so lately walked the waters in her pride, had carried with her, into the depths of Ocean, those treasures which had been boasted of and trusted in by those who were now weltering on the dreary abyss, filling the air with shouts and shrieks, and striving to catch sight of each other, by the glare of the lightning that flashed through the tumultuous gloom.

It was an awful scene; but one fraught with instruction and warning as well as terror. Like these voyagers, we launch forth on the ocean of life, without portent or foreboding of danger; and, for a while, all may seem bright and propitious. But how soon may tempests burst upon us! How soon may clouds arise in a quarter which we now least suspect! How soon may calamities overtake us of which we now little dream! How soon may Death, that now seems afar off, stare us in the face, and lay his cold hand upon us! How soon may the gates of the eternal world be opened for us and our souls be ushered into the presence of the Judge! Surely, then, it becomes us to ask, What is our preparation for such an hour? What is it that we are wont to look to as our confidence, our support, our glory? Is it that which will outlast all the storms of time—which will avail us in the season of disaster, in the hour of dissolution—which will sustain us in death, and go with us, as a ground of trust, and a source of joy, into eternity? If we have been "making gold our hope, and saying to the fine gold thou art my confidence,"—if we have been wont to lean on any creature-support—then, surely, it concerns us to ponder this question, "What will ye do in the day of visitation, and in the desolation which shall come from far? to whom will ye

flee for help, and where will ye leave your glory?" And even if we can say that we sincerely desire to "glory only in the cross of Christ, by which the world is crucified unto us, and we unto the world," it is surely good for us to realize, in anticipation, that hour of death, which *must* come ere long—which *may* come in a moment suddenly;—that hour when one promise of God's word, which, like old James Durham, we can still "grip" with our failing faculties, will yield support and comfort which the whole created universe could not supply. Surely it is good for us thus to "die daily;" that, "seeing the heavens opened" and the earth passing away, we may rise to the height of our position as immortal beings; and, by rising, may rid ourselves of that dust of earth, which clogs our souls by cleaving to them so closely.

But it is not only from the dust of earthliness and carnality that the Church is called upon to shake herself free; it is also from the dust of despondency and sorrow. And it is by rising from the creature to the Creator; by rising above all discouragements and difficulties, in the strength of a joyful confidence in God; it is thus that we are to be delivered from all depressing fears and harrassing anxieties, either regarding our own spiritual welfare, or regarding the maintenance and advancement of the Lord's cause in the world.

Thus speaks the God of all grace to His afflicted and downcast Church:—"Yet now hear, O Jacob, my servant; and Israel whom I have chosen: Thus saith the Lord that made thee, and formed thee from the womb, which will help thee; FEAR NOT, O Jacob, my

servant; and thou Jesurun, whom I have chosen. For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring; and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water-courses. One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand, and surname himself by the name of Israel."*

"*Yet*," says the Lord—notwithstanding all thy unworthiness, and all the afflictions which thou hast deservedly borne—"Yet now hear, O Jacob my servant; and Israel whom I have chosen;"—Hear this, ye who glory in the name of Jacob and Israel, which, to those who worthily bear it, is a pledge of their participation in the blessings promised to Abraham and to his seed. Hear this, ye who lay hold on my covenant, and sincerely assume the name of my people. Hear this, ye who give evidence in your character and your lives that you have been "chosen in Christ that you should be holy;" and who give all the praise of whatever you have, and whatever you are, to Him who hath chosen you. Hear this, ye who follow evangelically in the footsteps of Jacob; ye who have put on Christ, and, arrayed in the perfumed garments of His righteousness, have obtained the blessing of the Father, which you value more than all the luxuries and indulgences that the world covets, and for which it is willing to forfeit all spiritual joys and everlasting possessions. Hear this, ye who have sincerely entered on the service of God, and who count

* Isaiah xliv. 1–5.

that service light and pleasant, for the love you bear to Him. Hear this, ye who wrestle with God, in the strength which He gives you; and who refuse to let Him go till you have prevailed to obtain His blessing, and have achieved for yourselves the significant designation of "Israel." Hear this: Though chastisement has been deservedly laid upon you, and you cannot justify yourselves, nor make reparation for that declension and shortcoming over which you have cause to mourn; though you cannot, by any strength of your own, revive true religion among yourselves, or, by any efforts of your own, quicken those who lie dead and insensible around you; yet, "thus saith the Lord that made thee, that formed thee from the womb;"—thus saith He from whom you draw your being, and by whom you have been begotten again and created unto good works;—"thus saith He who will help thee"—He in whom your help is found, and who hath promised to sustain you by His grace:—"Fear not, O Jacob, my servant; and thou Jesurun," thou righteous, thou upright one—righteous through the imputed merits of Christ, and holy through the influence of the Spirit—thou Israelite indeed in whom there is no guile—thou whom I have "chosen unto salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth;"—"fear not;" put away all slavish fear, all faithless anxiety and dread.

"Fear not, O my servant Jacob, saith the Lord, for I am with thee." Fear not that I will ever cast thee off because of thine unworthiness. Fear not that any temptation shall overtake thee in which my grace—if thou seekest it—cannot give thee strength to overcome,

or from which my providence cannot make a way of escape. Fear not that thou shalt be left to fall back into thy former state of guilt and corruption. Fear not that thou shalt one day perish by the hand of thine enemies.* "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer." Fear not, O my church, that the gates of hell shall prevail against thee, or that my promise of thy extension and thy glory shall fail. Put away all such fears, and trust that thou shalt be "an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations;" thou shalt "break forth on the right hand and on the left," and enlarge thy borders to the end of the earth. Why? Not because of any worthiness or any strength in thee;—not because of any inherent power, or vigour, or expansive energy of thine; but because "I will pour water on him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground." I, the Lord, will pour down those spiritual influences without which the earth must be a scene of universal corruption, and the Church must become a desolation; but through the power of which the earth shall yet be renovated, and the Church shall be as a well watered garden, bearing abundant fruit to my praise.

"I will pour water on him that is thirsty." If there is any one who hath been awakened to anxiety concerning his soul,—who feels how dead and destitute and dreary is his natural condition; let him look up to me without fear, and I will pour on him the quickening, comforting, and purifying influences of my Spirit. If there is any one who hungers and thirsts after righteousness,—who desires to grow in grace, to advance in

* 1. Sam. xxvii. 1.

holiness; let him look up to me, and I will pour down upon him the Holy Spirit, the Sanctifier. If there is any one who thirsts after clearer perceptions of divine truth,—who seeks to advance in knowledge, and to have more clear and comprehensive views of scriptural doctrine; let him look up to me, and I will pour upon him the Spirit of truth, the Enlightener. If there is any one who thirsts after closer and more intimate communion with me, I will pour upon him the Spirit of adoption; I will manifest myself to him, and make my abode with him. If there is any one who thirsts after stronger assurances of my love, and of his own eternal salvation, I will pour down my Spirit to bear witness with his spirit that he is my child: I will shed abroad my love in his heart by the Holy Ghost given unto him: I will grant him the pledges of my favour, and the earnests of an everlasting inheritance.

But do you say that there are multitudes around you who care for none of these things,—multitudes who, though perishing for lack of the water of life, have *no* thirst for it; whose souls are dry and parched and barren, yet who have no desire for the outpouring of the Spirit upon them? Do you say that there are multitudes whose only question is, "What shall we eat, and what shall we drink, and wherewithal shall we be clothed?" and who, while looking earnestly for that rain and sunshine by which their fields may be rendered productive, and the fruits of the earth may be abundantly supplied for the satisfaction of their bodily wants, have no care for their *souls*, no anxiety for those heavenly influences by which their hearts may be changed, and the good seed of the word may be made to spring,

and grow, and bear fruit in their character and their lives to the praise of God? Do you say that the whole world around you lies contentedly in wickedness,—in subjection to the wicked one? Do you say that thousands of those to whom the offers of mercy are addressed despise and reject them; that thousands of those to whom opportunities are given to come and learn of Christ, and to receive spiritual blessings from Him, neglect His ordinances, blaspheme His name, and treasure up for themselves wrath against the day of wrath; that many even of those who profess to be His, yet manifest little anxiety to walk worthy of Him, to enjoy His presence, or to partake of His Spirit; that many of them show little delight in waiting upon Him, little pleasure in the tabernacles of His grace? And is your heart, therefore, often ready to tremble for the ark of God? Do you ask, How shall the Church be able to stand, and to maintain its place and preserve its purity, amidst influences so hostile, so deadening, so seductive; still more, how shall that Church be able to extend itself amidst a world so sunk in apathy and corruption; and how shall it be made to grow and flourish, till its branches overspread the nations? Yet, "fear not," saith the Lord; not only will I "pour water upon him that is thirsty," but "I will pour floods upon the dry ground." "I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh:" I will quicken those that are dead, and purify those that are corrupt, and enlighten those that sit in darkness. "I will be sought of them that asked not for me. I will be found of them that sought me not. I will say, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name." "Fear not thou, for I am with thee:

neither be dismayed, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. . . I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys. I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water. I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah-tree, and the myrtle, and the oil tree; I will set in the desert the fir-tree, and the pine, and the box together."* Fear not! only wait, and work, and pray, "until the Spirit be poured upon you from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest. . . Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters."†

But, again, do you look round on those who are growing up in the midst of you—those children whom God has given you to nurse for Him—those olive plants who are growing up around your table; and do you ask, How are these, who have been "shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin," to be made new creatures—to become children of God—to be purified from that corruption and delivered from that folly which is by nature bound up in their hearts? Or do you look on those who, though not, it may be, young in years, are yet babes in Christ,—children in understanding,—unconfirmed in character,—inexperienced, and exposed to manifold temptations; and do you ask, How are these to be strengthened, upheld, and made to grow unto the "perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ?" "Fear not," saith the Lord, "I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine

* Isaiah, xli. 10, 18, 19. † Isaiah, xxxii. 15, 20.

offspring: they shall grow up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses." Consecrate to me those children who are my heritage: bring them to me, and teach them to seek me early: "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," seeking that grace which is sufficient both for thee and for them; and "I will be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee:" "I will be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people." So shall race unto race praise me; and one generation shall show my wonderful works unto another. Watch over those tender branches which have been engrafted into Christ, but in which the sap as yet but feebly circulates, and which yet bring forth but scanty fruit; pray, with the assurance of a gracious answer, for those influences by which the germ of divine life may be fostered within them; for "they that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God." Thus shall they who are yet but weak in the faith grow in grace, and be "rooted and built up in Christ, and established in the faith as they have been taught;" until, being strengthened in principle, and confirmed in holy resolution, they shall openly avouch themselves to be on the Lord's side, and publicly enrol themselves among the soldiers of Christ. "One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel."

Hearken, then, O Church of the living God; hearken, O believing soul, whom the Son hath made free, whom the Spirit hath loosed from the bonds of sin and of

guilty fear; hearken to this stirring call, "Shake thyself from the dust; Arise!" But, having arisen in the strength of God, and found relief from distracting cares and griefs, hearken also to this invitation;—

"SIT DOWN."

Resting after Rising. It is dangerous, it is depressing, it is degrading, to sit as a slave amidst dust and darkness—to sit squalid and supine amidst the drear and deadly shades of condemnation and corruption, or of declension and despondency. But it is safe, it is seemly, it is sweet, having arisen and shaken thyself from the dust, to sit down amidst the light of life and of liberty—to sit down refreshed and rejoicing—to repose in the calm enjoyment of purity and of peace. Having cast off the yoke of sin and the burden of sorrow, and taken upon thee the yoke of Christ which is easy, and His burden which is light, thou mayest well expect to find rest unto thy soul—thou mayest well sit down under His shadow with great delight, feeling that His fruit is pleasant to thy taste.

"The ark of the covenant of the Lord" must "go before us, to search out a resting place for us." And it is by rising and following whithersoever the ark leads that we are to find true and satisfying repose. "We which have *believed do enter into rest*,"—into a present rest in God, which is the foretaste of perfect rest in glory. "The work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. And my people," saith the Lord, "shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings,

and in quiet resting-places." But without *rising* from man to God, from earth to Heaven, no real and permanent *rest* is to be found. And they who profess to be the children of light need, as well as others, to be warned against those blind guides who would lead them away from the only true rest of the soul. "My people," saith the Lord, "hath been lost sheep: their shepherds have caused them to go astray, they have turned them away on the mountains; they have gone from mountain to hill, they have forgotten their resting-place." It is the dayspring from on high" alone that can "guide our feet into the way of peace." It is "the Lord of peace himself" who alone can "give us peace always." The world cannot give it. All the resources of human reason are insufficient either to impart it, or to provide an availing substitute for it. True peace is not to be found in that frigid philosophy which would school men into indifference and apathy, and bid them submit without a struggle to an inevitable destiny that condemns them to suffering. Better the writhings of diseased humanity—better the wailings of conscious misery, and the loud cry for relief, than this death-like torpor—this silence of despair. More awful than all the thunders of the bombardment, and all the fierce tumult of the assault, is the unbroken stillness which, when the struggle is over, broods over the ghastly and corpse-encumbered ruins of the sacked and pillaged city. And more melancholy than all the vain strivings after satisfaction—all the battle with assailing troubles, in which so many are engaged, is the listless and dreary unconcern of those who have abandoned the contest, and renounced all aspirations after true happiness and abiding joy.

The philosophy that would tame down the immortal spirit of man to a pusillanimous contentment with its natural condition, and that would repress the longings of the soul after something better than sense or reason can supply, is false and vain, pernicious and irrational. Miserable comforters are they all who come to a man in his distress, and tell him of nothing but the folly and uselessness of murmuring—of the inevitable doom which consigns man to suffering, and infuses bitterness into every cup. Grief is not the less grievous, nor pain the less painful, because shared by multitudes. Happiness is not the less desirable because it has been forfeited by all. Nor can a man make himself happy by an effort of his will, or an exercise of his reason. In order that he may be happy, he must have the grounds and materials of happiness; he must have a source of satisfaction suited to his nature. In spite of all exhortations to contentment, he *will* be restless and uneasy—he *will* be tossed and troubled, till he finds those objects which God has taught and formed him to aspire after, as his chief good. That he should seek for happiness, and be restless till it is obtained, is matter neither of lamentation nor of blame. It is *well* that it should be so. This propensity was implanted in him by the Creator, and was designed to promote both his own highest interests and the glory of the God who made him. Man was made for happiness, and *cannot* and he *ought not* to be satisfied without it. The dove of Peace was a native of his bosom, in his original state of innocence. There it nestled, and there it was nurtured in those happy days. And though it has wandered afar off—scared and affrighted by the ghastly apparition of sin—it comes back with Right-

eousness as its mate, and hovers over the place of its birth, filling the air with its plaintive cooings, and longing to return, and to rest its wearied wing in the breast from which it had so long been banished. "Mercy and Truth are met together; Righteousness and Peace have embraced each other." There is no longer any insurmountable obstacle to the entrance of peace into the human soul. And the cause of such frequent disappointment in the search after happiness, is not that the pursuit is in itself unlawful, or that, under the dispensation of grace, the object of it is essentially unattainable, but that it is conducted in a way which cannot lead to success.

When a man has been awakened, in some degree, to a consciousness of his wants—to a sense of his vast capacities as an immortal being,—his natural impulse is to search out for himself some source of satisfaction; to grapple in his own strength with the difficulties that lie in his way; and to trust to his own wisdom for directing his steps to the object of his pursuit. But soon he finds himself involved in efforts that only prove his weakness, and in reasonings that only result in perplexity, and lead him on into ever-deepening darkness, and more hopeless entanglement. The light of nature fails him, when it has conducted his steps into that region where, most of all, uncertainty is torment. It shows him that there is a God of might and majesty; but, while it also, in some degree, indicates the goodness and long-suffering of that God, it points, at the same time, to His holiness and justice; and it leaves altogether unanswered the question which it has suggested, How can the favour of this God be gained? How can

His justice be satisfied, and His holiness vindicated in the acquittal of sinners? Reason is baffled in the vain attempt to solve the problem which it has itself propounded. Conscience is unable to allay the fears which it has raised; or to give any reply to the momentous inquiry, How shall a man be just before God? Even Providence is not its own interpreter, nor can it supply a clue to the labyrinth of its own mysteries—"a mighty maze" which, though "not without a plan," appears to the eye of sense and of reason so darkly and perplexingly intricate in its windings. Why do we so often "see the wicked great in power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree?" Why are the righteous subjected to so many afflictions? Why do want and woe, disease and death, war and pestilence, abound under the government of a God of love and of almighty power? These are questions to which no satisfactory reply can be gathered from any investigation, conducted by man's limited faculties, in that contracted sphere of observation which alone is open to his view.

Thus the more earnestly a man seeks for peace by his own unaided efforts—by the working of his own mind, or the labour of his own hands—the further does it fly from him. He finds, like the Preacher of old, that "in much wisdom is much grief; and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow. The multitude of his thoughts within him, and the eagerness of his desires after some place of rest—some stable support for his soul—only defeat their own object, and involve him in greater perplexity and distraction. There is one alone who can say to all the tumultuous billows that toss and trouble the soul, "Peace, be still!" and imme-

diately there shall be a great calm. There is one mystery that bathes in light, and solves by love, every other mystery; and that is the great "mystery of godliness, —God manifest in the flesh." If we would find relief from the perplexity and despondency with which we are so apt to be filled in looking on the scene which earth now presents, it must be by turning from human reason to divine revelation, and from the proofs of man's ruin to the provision made for his recovery.

Rising from the contemplation of all that is dark and ominous in the present aspect of the world, to the realization of those glorious things that are spoken of that "Prince of Peace, of the increase of whose government and whose peace there shall be no end," we can calmly *sit down* under the shadow of the Almighty, obedient to the voice that speaks to us from Heaven—"Be still and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted on the earth." "Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man that bringeth wicked devices to pass. . . . For evildoers shall be cut off; but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth."

However mysterious be the *origin* of sin, with all its attendant evil, yet when, on the one hand, we do accept it as an indubitable and all too certain fact, that sin exists, and that it must be the destruction of those who are left under its power; and when, on the other hand, we believe in the equally certain truth, that a way of deliverance from sin and all its consequences has been opened up; we can see many wise and important reasons why man should be surrounded,

as he is, with the tokens of his lost estate—with the emblems and evidences of sin's malignant working—and with the awful portents and precursors of that destruction, which awaits the despisers of God's grace. We can see the hand of mercy, as well as of justice, in the disease and death that assail man's frame—in the convulsive warring of the elements around him—in the roll of the thunder and the flash of the lightning—in the rage of the tempest and the sweep of the hurricane—in the desolating fires of the volcano, and the heave of the engulphing earthquake—in the sunstroke and the pestilence—in the ravages of flood and of flame. Ay, and we can see good reason, not only why man should be surrounded by these memorials and emblems of the havoc which sin works on the earth, but why sin itself should sometimes be loosed, for a season, from its accustomed restraints, and permitted to rage horribly—showing itself in all its naked and hideous deformity—stalking abroad with gigantic strides, horrifying and appalling even those who had been familiarized with its more ordinary manifestations. Such examples of the evil and destructive nature of sin are fitted to arouse those who comprehend them aright to break loose from sin's entanglements and snares, and to flee for safety from its power and its penalty. And they are fitted to enhance the believer's estimate of the deliverance wrought for him from a sinful *heart*, and of the refuge provided for him from the dangers that abound in a sinful *world*.

Our eyes have of late been directed to regions in which the destructive and desolating power of sin have been both symbolically illustrated and terribly exempli-

fied. In yon land in the south of *Europe* where the beast has its seat—yon land so favoured by nature, so blighted by crushing despotism and Antichristian delusion,—there occurred not long ago a physical convulsion—an earthquake by which upwards of twenty thousand human beings were entombed, not far from that volcanic mountain whose frequent eruptions and ebullitions are emblematic of sin's restless and malignant activity. And at this hour we are looking for the renewal of *political* convulsions—it may be of bloody strifes—on the European arena, originating in the oppression and misgovernment to which that unhappy land is subjected.

Turning to the East, we behold, in Southern *Asia*, a land where the fierce heats poured down by a tropical sun seemed lately but a faint type of those passions which had been "set on fire of hell," and which burned and raged in the plains below;—a land where the sudden rise and desolate sweep of its typhoon and tornado seemed to be outrivalled by the unexpected outburst, and rapid spread, of insurrectionary violence among a portion of its inhabitants; and where the ferocity of its tigers, the guile of its serpents, and the remorseless cruelty of its adders and alligators, appeared to have been all concentrated in its men, and to have fitted them for deeds of unparalleled atrocity. Yet have we also found there an example of the power of God to keep in check the rage of man—to defeat the subtle machinations of him who is "a murderer and a liar from the beginning," and to give strength to those who are weak, and deliverance to those who seem to be appointed to death. Let us, then, "be wise to observe

these things: so shall we understand the loving-kindness of the Lord:" so shall we learn that it is not only when we "sit, every one under his vine and under his fig-tree, with none to make us afraid,"—it is not only when "all the earth sitteth still and is at rest," that the believer can "sit down" in tranquillity and confidence; but that, even when "the heathen rage," when "the treacherous dealer dealeth treacherously and the spoiler spoileth," he can rest in the calm assurance that "the Lord God omnipotent reigneth," and will be faithful to all his promises.

Think, then, how, in the whole history of that Indian revolt, the hand of the Lord has been manifest, making the wrath of man to praise Him, and restraining the remainder of that wrath. Think how marvellous were those repeated interpositions of His providence, by which the secret designs formed for the seizure of Calcutta, and for the massacre of all its European inhabitants, were discovered and frustrated. Think how fearful would have been the result if that conspiracy had proved successful; and if, as the anticipated consequence, the standard of revolt had been raised throughout the length and breadth of India. Think how the tide of civilization would have been driven back;—how the light of Christianity would, in all human probability, have been extinguished, at least for a time, in that land. Think what murky clouds of superstition would again have gathered over those plains, which have been the scene of missionary labours, and the subject of so many prayers and hopeful anticipations. Consider how obvious was the providence of God, in raising up for this emergency such men as the two Lawrences, and Havelock, and

others like-minded;—men who, while discharging so wisely and so well their duties to an earthly sovereign, were yet so uncompromisingly true to their Heavenly King—so ready to use their influence, their substance, and their personal efforts for the promotion of Christ's cause, and the extension of His kingdom. Think of the strength which God gave to so many of the weak and tender at that awful crisis;—of the peace and quietness in which He kept so many of His people amidst such scenes of accumulated horror and agonizing suspense. Think of the indomitable courage and perseverance with which the God of battles nerved the hearts of all ranks of our army, and the untiring energy with which he enabled them to bear up amidst such fatigues and dangers and privations, endured under a climate so relaxing and debilitating.

Think (to take a particular instance) of that almost unparalleled scene presented at the defence of Lucknow; where, when, in a literal sense, "the blast of the terrible ones was as a storm against the wall," God was "a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat." Think how He there defended the weak and the helpless by the instrumentality of a heroic band, who night and day, for months together, manned the shattered ramparts, and held their ground so firmly against the ceaseless cannonade, and the deadly assault, that the bloodthirsty and swarming myriads who compassed them about could not gain a foot of ground upon them, nor effect an entrance even over their ruined defences. Think how truly God was "a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress," when even women delicately nurtured were

enabled not only to bear up under their unwonted privations and hardships, but to minister with untiring assiduity to the sick and the wounded. Think how truly God "brought down the noise of strangers, as the heat in a dry place, even the heat with the shadow of a cloud;" when, after a period of hope deferred, during which many an anxious eye, and many a sleepless ear, was strained to catch the signal of the promised deliverance, relief was at last brought, and the sick and the delicate, with all their brave defenders, were conducted forth in perfect safety, under the very guns of the unsuspecting enemy; and carried beyond the reach of danger, before it was known that the bird had escaped from the snare of the fowler.

In these incidents of the Indian insurrection, and in many others—such as those associated with the names of Delhi, Allahabad, and Futteyghur—we find illustrations of the strength and security which God can give in seasons of calamity, and especially amidst the dangers which flow from the violence of wicked men, who are permitted to exemplify in their own persons the vileness and virulence of sin. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed upon thee, because he trusteth in thee." The truth of this promise was experienced, during these troublous times, by our missionaries, and by many other of the people of God, while thousands around them were cowering with terror and trembling with alarm; and while tales of slaughter, and rumours of conspiracy, and horrific details of the barbarities perpetrated by an infuriated soldiery, shook the nerves of the stoutest and appalled the hearts of the bravest. In the previous war, too, there were many

among the ranks of the army who, as soldiers of the cross, felt the faithfulness of this promise. It was felt by not a few around the leaguered walls of Sebastopol; it was felt amidst the din of battle and the silent ravages of yet more deadly disease; it was felt amidst the thunders of the cannonade, and the dreary silence of the cheerless bivouack;—in the ravine where prayer was wont to be made, and amidst the headlong rush of the assault.

So has it ever been, and so will it ever be, with those who "trust in the Lord Jehovah, in whom is everlasting strength." However terrible and trying to flesh and blood be the dangers and sufferings to which they are exposed—whether it be by mortal foes, or by invisible enemies, that they are menaced; whether it be by the shafts of temporal disaster, or by the fiery darts of Satan, that they are assailed—they need not fear what Earth or Hell can do against them. "In the shadow of the Almighty's wings may they make their refuge until these calamities be overpast." "He is their rock and their salvation: He is their defence: they shall not be greatly moved." "He has been a shelter for them, a strong tower from the enemy; and they will abide in His tabernacle for ever." Whatever be the outward activities or conflicts to which they are called, they can never desire to go forth from the secret place of the Most High in search of any other refuge, any other source of comfort or support. They will "make the Lord their habitation," and will ever feel that, as regards the security of their eternal interests and the promotion of their souls' health and welfare, "their strength is to *sit still*" under the shadow of that great

Rock which is a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest.

Thus, having loosed herself from the bands of her neck, having put the raiment of her captivity from off her, having arisen from the earth, and shaken herself from the dust, the Church is called upon to sit down in quietness and confidence under the canopy of Divine favour. But it is not as unclothed, but as clothed upon with array befitting her blessed condition, that she is called to take her seat in the pavilion of her Lord :—

"PUT ON THY BEAUTIFUL GARMENTS, O JERUSALEM, THE HOLY CITY."

Raiment of Rejoicing. Being divested of the garb of mourning, she is invested in garments of praise. Having "put off her sackcloth," she is "girded with gladness." She is "clothed with change of raiment." The best robe is brought forth for her. A wedding garment is put upon her. Her rest is not only sweet and serene, but glad and glorious. The joy of the Lord makes her face to shine, and "the beauty of the Lord is upon her." "The King's daughter is all glorious within; her clothing is of wrought gold. She shall be brought unto the King in raiment of needlework; the virgins, her companions that follow her, shall be brought unto thee. With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought; they shall enter into the King's palace." It is as "the holy city" that Jerusalem is called to "put on her beautiful garments," and this new song is put into the mouth of every one

who worthily partakes in the privileges of the Church: —"I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God, for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself like a priest* with beautiful raiment, and as a bride adorneth herself with festal array." It is as a priestly attire that the garments of salvation are worn by believers; it is as priests unto God, through Christ, that they are clothed with these "holy garments made for glory and for beauty." And it is God Himself who puts this raiment upon them. In covering them with the robe of righteousness, He clothes them with the garments of salvation; for righteousness is the salvation of God: wherefore the prayer "Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness" is answered thus, "I will clothe her priests with salvation."†

The righteousness in which the believer is invested, and which constitutes his salvation, is both an *imputed* and *imparted* righteousness. It comprehends both a title to Heaven and a meetness for it. It implies, in the first place, that righteousness which has been wrought out by Christ, and which is "unto all and *upon* all them that believe. Christ is "made of God unto them righteousness." In Him they are accepted; in Him they are justified; and in Him only have they reason to glory. But the garments of salvation also include that righteousness which the Holy Spirit imparts to all who believe in Christ. He "renews them in the spirit of their minds;" and

* This is implied in the original. † Psalm cxxxii., 9–16.

enables them to "put on the Lord Jesus Christ;" to "put off the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and to put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Their participation in the justifying *grace* of which Christ is the channel, is manifested by their participation in those *graces* of which Christ was the great example, and of which He is the author, through the Spirit whom He sends down upon His people.

In these robes of righteousness, these garments of salvation, all believers are clothed. The righteousness wrought out by Christ is imputed to them from the moment of their exercising faith; and the righteousness inwrought by the Spirit, begins at the same moment to exhibit itself in their character, and will continue to be progressively developed, until it is perfected in the day of Christ. When therefore it is said to the Church, "Put on thy beautiful garments," it is not implied that now for the first time she is to lay hold on the righteousness of Christ," or to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit. But just as, when the Church invokes the aid of God, saying "Put on strength, O arm of the Lord," she seeks the open *manifestation* of His power in her behalf; so, when the Lord says to her "Put on thy beautiful garments," He calls upon her to rejoice in His salvation,—to make her boast in Him,—to arise and shine, that "the glory of the Lord may be *seen upon her*." He says, as it were, Being clad by the Lord in the robe of righteousness, "be glad in the Lord and rejoice, ye righteous." "Sing unto the Lord, bless His name; shew forth His salvation from day to day. Declare His glory among the heathen, His wonders among all people."

And surely praise is comely for those on whom the Lord hath "put his own comeliness!" Surely they may well rejoice, over whom the Lord rejoices!" When so goodly is the raiment of the believer, surely good is his resolution—"I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God." Looking into the mirror of God's word, he finds that an entire transformation has taken place in his whole condition and character in the sight of Him with whom he has to do. Whereas by nature he was vile and degraded, guilty and polluted; now he is accepted in the Beloved, and his services are acceptable, because rendered in love. His sin is covered, not only with the mantle of oblivion, but with a spotless and shining robe, which God Himself has provided, and on which the eye of God can look with complacence. The righteousness with which he is clothed is a robe brighter and fairer than that which the angels can boast, for it is the righteousness of Immanuel. And the righteousness that dwells *within* him is more firmly rooted than that of our first parents in Paradise; for its growth, its permanence, and its ultimate perfection are secured in everlasting covenant, and do not depend upon creature strength. When the Virgin was congratulated on the Son that should be born of her, she burst forth in the language of exulting rapture, saying, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour; for He that is mighty hath done great things to me; and holy is His name." This is the first note of song that comes floating down to us from Gospel times: and surely if Christ hath been formed in our hearts the hope of glory, we may well catch up the strain, and say, "The Lord hath done

great things for us, whereof we are glad." All the members of the true Church have, even now, "a beauty that is perfect" in the sight of God, "through His own comeliness which He hath put upon them." Even now God is well pleased in them for the sake of Christ's righteousness. And they "through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith." Exulting on earth in the righteousness which is of God, they shall be "exalted in His righteousness" to Heaven. "Beautified now with salvation," they shall be beatified hereafter with the Saviour; having here "washed their robes, and made them white with the blood of the Lamb," they shall at last appear "before the Throne, clothed in white robes, and with palms in their hands."

And the Church as a body is even now made "always to triumph in Christ Jesus." She is complete in Him who is the Head over all principality and power. The glory which the Father hath given to Christ, Christ hath given to her. Her emblem is "A woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars." And she is called to "Rejoice in the hope of the glory of God," looking forward to that time, when there shall be "heard in Heaven the voice of a great multitude, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of many thunderings, saying 'Allelujah! for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and give honour to Him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready.' And to her it shall be granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, white and clean."

That time has not yet come. The Church's warfare

is not yet ended. Though not *of* the world she is still *in* it, and still exposed to many dangers from without and from within. But the encouraging assurance is given to her,—

"HENCEFORTH THERE SHALL NO MORE COME INTO THEE THE UNCIRCUMCISED AND THE UNCLEAN."

Promise of Preservation. There seems to be here a promise both of preservation from corruption and of protection from destruction:—"The uncircumcised and the unclean shall no more come into thee," either to pollute and profane by their presence, or to desolate by their assaults and inroads.

In the former sense, this promise, as applicable to the literal Jerusalem, was, in some degree, fulfilled, after the return from Babylon, by the complete deliverance of the restored tribes from that tendency to imitate the idolatries of the neighbouring nations, which had been the snare and the ruin of their fathers. And remarkable instances are recorded of the determination of their rulers to keep them separate from the heathen nations around them. At the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem, "they read in the book of Moses in the audience of the people; and therein was found written that the Ammonite and the Moabite should not come into the congregation of the Lord for ever. . . Now it came to pass, when they had heard the law, that they separated from Israel all the mixed multitude."* And when Nehemiah "saw Jews that had married wives of Ash-

* Nehem. xiii., 1–3.

dod, of Ammon, and of Moab," he "contended with them," and said, "Shall we hearken unto you to do this great evil, to transgress against our God, in marrying strange wives?" "Thus he cleansed them from all strangers."*

In the second sense, as implying protection from hostile assaults and incursions, this assurance was also in some degree literally verified to the Jews, inasmuch as they were not again assailed by the Monarchs who held possession of Babylon. But its fulfilment, like that of all the other promises of outward prosperity and preservation given to the peculiar people under the Old Testament dispensation, was suspended on the condition of their obedience and fidelity: and when it had been forfeited by their declension, their city and their temple were desecrated—though not with impunity—by Antiochus Epiphanes, and at last were totally laid waste by Titus.

As regards the Jews, then, the full accomplishment of this promise is only to be looked for at that yet future period when "All Israel shall be saved," and shall not only be restored to their own land, but cleansed from all defilement—washed in the "Fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness," and guarded from every polluting influence, and every hostile attack, by the omnipotent "Shepherd of Israel."

Even as regards the visible Church of Christ, the absolute fulfilment of this promise is only to be expected in millennial days. At all times, however, in an important sense, it finds its accomplishment. But to

* Nehem. xiii., 23, 25, 27, 30.

understand how this effected, we must keep in view the distinction between the Church *invisible* and the Church *visible*. By "the Church invisible," we mean the whole body of the elect, gathered, during successive ages, out of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues. This is the Bride whom Christ loved, and for whom He gave Himself. This is the seed promised to Him in covenant, and in whom He shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied. By "the Church visible," we understand the entire company of those who, wherever scattered over the Earth, unite together in professing faith in Christ, and in observing His ordinances and statutes. Were the visible Church everywhere perfect in its constitution and administration,—did it include all those who ought to be recognised as belonging to it, and exclude all those who have no title to its privileges,—it would be one in itself, and, in the aggregate of successive generations, it would be one with the Church invisible. But, seeing that through human imperfection the visible Church has been rent, marred, and tainted, it is only in a qualified and conditional sense that any branch of that Church, in its corporate capacity, can be considered as interested in those assurances of divine favour and protection,—those promises of security and perpetuity, which are given to the Spouse of Christ. And it is just in proportion to the fidelity and obedience of any such branch to the great Head of the Church, that it is warranted in looking for that spiritual prosperity,—that defence from all adversaries, and deliverance from all real evil, which are promised to the true Church of Christ.

Into the Church invisible none who are spiritually

"uncircumcised and unclean" can possibly enter, either to desecrate or to desolate her; none such can partake in any of her privileges; and none can pluck any of her members out of the Father's hand, or rob them of any part of their covenant heritage. Into the Church visible, none who are "uncircumcised in heart and ears" can enter *consistently with her Divine constitution*: and while she sincerely strives to act in conformity with the will of her Lord and Saviour, and to keep herself separate from the world, God has promised to be "a wall of fire around her and the glory in the midst of her," frustrating the efforts of those who would assail, and casting out those who would pollute her; or giving them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth.

Many and various are the sources of danger—external and internal—against which the visible Church needs to be defended. "A great door and effectual is opened to her," for the advancement of God's cause on the Earth, but "there are many adversaries."

The world is her enemy, because she "testifieth of it that the works thereof are evil." A Church that is conformed to the world—if such a society deserves the name of Church—may find favour with the world, for it is *of* the world, and the world loves its own. A dead Church, like a dead body, becomes assimilated to the earth in which it is buried. A living Church, on the contrary, has the power of assimilating to itself the elements with which it comes in contact, and on which its influence is exerted. Its desire and aim is, that all men may become "not only almost but altogether such as itself is." But the world dreads such assimilation: it has no wish to be absorbed into the Church, or to

yield materials for the Church's increase. It hates a body which it regards as the devourer of its children, the destroyer of its joys, the restless meddler with its pursuits and pleasures. A Church that permits the powers of this world to usurp its government, to control its discipline, to prescribe its teaching, to give a tone to its spirit, may obtain the world's patronage and the world's smile. But a Church that is faithful to its Head, pure in its doctrine, uncompromising in its testimony against all unrighteousness, is an offence to the world. The efforts of the world, therefore, are bent either to extirpate, or to secularize and enslave, the Church. This it strives to do, either by threatenings and persecutions and oppressions, or by wiles, allurements, and bribes, and by the entanglements of an artful and ensnaring diplomacy.

Again, the Church is exposed to danger from the wiles and assaults of Satan. The prince of this world —"the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience"—regards the existence of the Church as the great obstacle to his absolute dominion on earth. And he knows that the purer and the more united the Church is, the more efficient must it be, both for the pulling down of his strongholds, and for the resistance of his encroachments. Therefore he strives, both by tempting, and tampering with, the members of the visible Church, and by stirring up, and directing, his agents in the world, to discourage, to divide, to pollute, and to enfeeble the Church—to sow in it the seeds of heresy and error and strife—to thwart its projects, and to turn to his own account every weakness within it, and every trial or obstruction with which it may meet.

There are also other dangers, which, though in part included under those of which we have already spoken, or attributable to these, may yet be viewed as separate and independent sources of alarm. There are the remaining infirmities—it may be the latent unbelief and unmortified sin—in the members of the visible Church, which, if not checked and counteracted by Divine grace, might lead, not only to backsliding and inconsistency, but to open and utter apostacy. There are the scandals that fall out in the Church, and by which it may be disgraced and discouraged. These are the cases of perplexity, and embarrassment, and difficulty that may occur in the administration of the Church's affairs, by which heats, and animosities, and divisions may be engendered. There are the rash proceedings and hasty words by which even conscientious men may embroil and distract the Church. And there are perils from the desolating judgments, which, because of prevailing iniquity, may be brought upon those nations of which the Church forms a part. By these it may sometimes seem to be in danger of being altogether wasted away and consumed. Thus, when God brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly, the little family of Noah, to which the Church was then confined, might have appeared, to those ignorant of the provision made for its rescue, to be in peril of being swept away with the rest of the earth's inhabitants. When God destroyed the cities of the plain, Lot, who almost alone represented the Church amidst the manifold abominations of these corrupt cities, seemed in danger of perishing with them. When the tribes of Israel were carried away into Babylon, they who were represented by the "good figs, very

good," shared in the hardships of captivity with those who were represented by "evil figs, very evil, that could not be eaten, they were so evil."

But, whatever be the dangers to which the Church is exposed, greater is He that is for her, than all that can be against her. "God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved. God shall help her, and that right early." The world may spread its snares for her: Satan may rage horribly against her, knowing that his time is short: but she is founded upon a Rock; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against her. "The Lord will create upon every dwelling-place of Mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night; for upon all the glory shall be a defence." Her enemies shall be overawed, and kept in check, by the evidence that "the Lord is there," to take part with those who trust in Him. And if any shall disregard "the glory in the midst of her," and presumptuously attempt to break through "the wall of fire" that surrounds her, it shall be to their own discomfiture and destruction. "The nation and the kingdom that will not serve" Christ and His Church "shall perish: yea all those nations shall be utterly wasted." "Evil shall slay the wicked and those that hate the righteous shall be desolate." But "The Lord redeemeth the soul of His servants; and none of them that trust in Him shall be desolate." The eternal attributes of the Almighty are all engaged for the defence of those who make their trust under the shadow of his wings. "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them." The mountains round

about them are full of horses and chariots of fire.* The Lord looketh through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubleth the host of the Egyptians.† And fire comes down from God out of Heaven to devour those enemies that compass about the camp of the saints and the holy city.‡

And not only shall the Church be defended from all her enemies;—she shall be "*more* than conqueror" in all her struggles; she shall gain by all the assaults made against her, and all the difficulties with which she has to contend. Her graces shall thus be exercised and strengthened. And under the superintending providence and the sanctifying grace of God, all the perils and trials to which she is exposed, shall be made to work together for weaning her from every idol, and rooting out from her every remnant of worldliness, and self-confidence, and self-seeking. "The Lord shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and He shall purify the sons of Levi; and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer to the Lord an offering in righteousness. Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, as in former years." Thus the Church is encouraged to pursue her course, assured that "no weapon formed against her shall prosper"—that the most afflictive "things which happen to her shall fall out rather to the furtherance of the Gospel," and shall contribute to the promotion of her true prosperity, and to the success of her heavenly mission. She is cheered by the prospect of that time when "they shall not hurt nor destroy in

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* 2 Kings, vi. 16. † Exod. xiv. 24. ‡ Rev. xx. 9.

all God's holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." And into the new Jerusalem "there shall in nowise enter anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."

Conclusion. In conclusion, then, while we raise to Heaven the earnest and importunate cry "Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord; awake, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old;"* let us listen to the response, which calls upon us to prove the sincerity of our supplications, and to avail ourselves of the grace which we seek, by arousing ourselves to diligence;—by stirring up the gift that is in us;—by putting forth what little strength we have, and laying hold on the strength of God;—by asserting our liberty to serve the Lord;—by casting off all deadening and depressing influences;—by trusting in the Lord and doing good;—by glorying and rejoicing only in the God of our salvation;—"Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem."† "Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion: put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean. Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion."

While we utter the prayer, "O Lord revive thy work," let us see that we ourselves be always abound-

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* Isa. li. 9. † Isa. xli. 17.

ing in the work of the Lord." The building up of the Church, and the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom, *is* "the work of the Lord,"—a work in which he is Himself engaged and interested: but that is no reason why we should claim a dispensation from engaging in this work: it is, on the contrary, a reason why we should count it our highest privilege, as well as our most sacred duty, to devote ourselves to its advancement, under His direction, and in dependence on His effectual aid.

Processes of Restoration and Revival. Vital religion, both in its origination and in its maintenance, is the work of the Lord: *First*, because He has made provision in man's nature for its production. *Secondly*, because He has exhibited Himself to man in a way which, if rightly understood and appreciated, is fitted to call into appropriate exercise man's religious susceptibilities and propensities. *Thirdly*, because He has provided the instrumentalities, by which the exhibition thus made of His character and His will may be pressed on man's attention, and brought to bear upon his understanding, his conscience, and his heart. And *lastly*, because by Him the Holy Spirit is sent down, to render effectual the instruments and agencies thus used. It must be in accordance with all these principles that we seek the revival of religion, if our efforts and expectations are not to be disappointed. God is unchangeable. If He has given to man a certain constitution, *He* will act, and He requires that in our endeavours to promote religion, *we* should act, in a way adapted to human nature as He has formed it; for man is to be drawn only "with the

cords of a man." If He has given a revelation which He has declared to be sufficient for the manifestation of His attributes and purposes, He will give no other, and He requires that we should faithfully and fully use that which He has granted to us. If He has appointed the instruments by which His truth is to be published and His work advanced, He will honour these instruments and will not suffer them to be set aside in favour of any other. If He has promised to pour down the influences of the Holy Spirit but yet has said that "for this thing He will be inquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them," He will neither supersede these influences by any other agency, nor dispense with the necessity of our praying for the descent of the Spirit.

Let us, then, labour and pray, pray and labour, with the confident assurance that "*His* work will appear unto us," and that He will "establish the work of *our* hands,"—that "He will revive us again," and that "His people shall rejoice in Him." Let us "direct our prayer unto Him, and look up," expecting an answer. And, looking around us, let us mark with hopeful interest every indication of a stirring among the dry bones, or of a quickening among those whose souls had been cleaving to the dust. However sharp the strokes, however severe the rebukes, by which the men of the world are startled from their deathlike slumbers, or the members of the visible Church are aroused from their torpor; let us be thankful if, by any means, the lethargy and languor which had been settling down even over evangelical Christendom, be broken up; and a fatal self-complacency be exchanged for that blessed despair of self, which will lead to an importunate application to

the God of all grace. Let us contemplate with adoring gratitude, the wise and wondrous dealings of Him who is able to make the most desolating calamities, and the darkest sorrows, subservient to the commencement and furtherance of that process which, beginning with the throes of awakening, and the throbbings of anxiety and alarm, terminates in songs of praise amidst scenes of glory.

Let us trace the working of the Lord in the various steps of that process, as we see it exemplified in the case of individuals smitten with conviction, and stricken with calamity; and in the case of communities or Churches humbled under God's mighty hand, and crying to Him out of the depths of affliction, and of conscious want and weakness. And let us seek that, among us and around us, the grace of God may so co-operate with His providence, that light may arise out of darkness; that glory may dwell in our land; and that we may be made glad according to the days in which we have been afflicted, and the years in which we have seen evil.

Illustrations of these Processes. I have stood among the Alps, at the foot of their monarch mountain, when dark and weeping clouds enveloped the whole scene, and obscured every towering height, and wrapped in impenetrable gloom all the grandeur of cliffs and glaciers, of sombre woods and gleaming cascades;—when the big drops fell fast; and the lightnings leapt frequent from the lurid and louring canopy; and the thunder was reverberated by a thousand echoes. But while I gazed upon that chaotic agglomeration of

mists and rocks—that wild imbroglio of earth and sky, the heavens became silent; the last mutterings of the thunder died away; the lightnings ceased to flash and the rain to fall. The drooping and melancholy clouds began to lift themselves up from the valleys in which they had been lying prostrate and oppressed. The billowy vapours rolled away from the sloping banks, and the mountain gorges, that had been inundated by the misty deluge. The rivers and fountains of waters leapt again sparkling into view. The great rocks stood forth again in the grandeur of their stability and strength. Higher, and yet higher, the cloudy curtain rose, revealing cliff after cliff, and hill after hill; while, to the expectant eye gazing in the direction of Mount Blanc, each mountain, as it emerged in its snowy splendour, seemed to bound the prospect, and to claim the sovereignty of the range,—precluding the imagination of anything more lofty or more magnificent that still remained to be developed. But yet the process of evolution went on; and Alp after Alp burst into view, as the clouds disappeared, and the shadows fled away: till at last,—far off in a region that seemed to belong to the heavens rather than to the earth, the head of the true monarch reared itself in peerless majesty. And just as it appeared, to claim its unquestionable preminence, the first star of the evening glittered forth above it, like a lustrous diamond surmounting the icy crown of the glorious sovereign.

And such is the scene which, in the spiritual world, seems to be presented and developed before our eye, when we contemplate that process of awakening and strengthening, of gladdening and adorning, which we

have been endeavouring to trace,—whether we consider it as exemplified in the case of an individual soul, of the Church as a body, or of the community amidst which the Church testifies of the truth.

In the case of the individual soul, the scene opens under the dim and murky obscuration of tearful sorrow. The day of awakening is "a day of darkness and of gloominess;"—a day of mourning and of bitterness as for a first-born;—a day in which the sad and self-condemning soul feels that all the thunders of God's wrath, —all the lightnings of God's withering rebuke, might justly be sent forth to scath and to consume it. But, instead of the fiery bolts which an accusing conscience might have dreaded, God sends forth the gentle gale of His Spirit, to dispel the brooding clouds of weeping sorrow,—to reveal to the contrite soul all the riches of that free and glorious grace, which, where sin abounded, did so much more abound, and which has so fully provided for the restoration of the lost to perfect purity and consummate bliss. Gradually, for this purpose, does the Spirit open out to the eye of the sinner a clearer and more comprehensive exhibition of the scheme of grace. And as He progressively removes all darkness and misconception, and sheds over the amazing truths of the Gospel a brighter and broader illumination, the humble believer rejoices more and more in the prospect that grows and expands before him. He sees that God's "mercy is in the heavens, and His faithfulness reacheth to the clouds; and His righteousness is like the great mountains." He sees "the mountains" of God's everlasting and stable covenant "bringing peace unto His people, and the little hills by righteousness."

He sees "how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of Him that bringeth good tidings; that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that saith unto Zion, 'Thy God reigneth.'" Thus does he "go out with joy, and is led forth in peace. The mountains and the hills break forth before him into singing; and all the trees of the forest clap their hands." Higher and vaster the culminating glories of the great salvation rise to his enraptured gaze, until, in the serene heights of Heaven, there shines forth the bright star of an assured and joyful hope,—the evening star of Time, the "morning star"* of Eternity.

So also has it been, and so shall it be, with the Church of Christ as a body. Her beginnings were amidst darkness and obscurity. Her first awakening to life was amidst the clouds and tempests of persecution. There was little in her outward aspect or condition that could foretoken the exaltation and extension that had been promised to her. But, being awakened, she put on the strength which God had provided for her. She was endued with power from on high. She loosed herself from all restricting and hampering bonds. She shook herself from the dust of carnality and faint-hearted despondency. She arose radiant and rejoicing; and sat down, clothed in her beautiful garments, invested with the beauty of holiness, and resolved to keep her garments unspotted from the world, and to remain separate from the uncircumcised and the unclean. The clouds rolled gradually away from the hill of Zion, disclosing the strong foundations which God had laid in the holy

* Rev. ii. 28.

mountains, and the springs which he had made to flow from them.* And if, in after times, the glory of the Church was shrouded, and her beauty obscured, yet again and again has the process of awakening and strengthening, of emancipation and purification and adorning, been repeated. And at each successive season of revival the clouds have been lifted higher, displaying a wider and a brighter prospect; and giving more ample earnests of that time when "the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the tops of the mountains, and exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it;"—when "in this mountain the Lord of Hosts shall make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees; of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And He will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God shall wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of His people shall He take away from off all the earth; for the Lord hath spoken it."

Thus, too, do gloom and storm often prove the precursors of light, and of substantial peace and joy, in those communities amidst which the Church exists, but where she has long had cause to mourn the feebleness of her influence. Such gloom and storm have frequently gathered of late, from various quarters, over our own land, and over other lands connected with us by political relations, by affinity of race, or by community of religious profession. The thunder clouds of war

* Psalm lxxxvii. 1 and 7.

have darkened our horizon, flashing forth their fiery terrors, discharging their scathing bolts, and deluging with their red rain the fair fields of the East. Tempests of commercial disaster have raged around us, overturning, as with the sweep of a tornado, the towers and temples of Mammon, and involving in their ruin thousands who were not "sinners above others," but whose sufferings are a warning to us that, except we repent of all trust in the creature, and build our hopes of happiness and satisfaction on a more stable foundation than this world can afford, our expectation must perish, and our blossom must go up as dust. And these dispensations of Providence, seconded by the rebukes and invitations of the Word, and accompanied by the quickening influence of the Spirit, have been made effectual for the awakening of many. Multitudes in the regions of the West, and not a few in our own land, seeing the weakness and worthlessness of all that is of earth, have stirred up themselves to lay hold upon God;—have put on His strength; and thus have loosed themselves from the bonds of iniquity;—have shaken themselves from the dust of sordid earthliness;—have arisen and sat down in the attitude of those who wait for their Lord;—have put on the beautiful garments of salvation;—and separated themselves from the uncircumcised and the unclean.

Let us pray, and let us labour, that many, many more may be awakened and quickened; imbued with Divine strength, and made free by the Son of God; raised from the dust, and made to sit down in a place of true dignity and honour, clothed with the robe of righteousness, and cleansed from the corruption that is

in the world through lust. Let us pray that He who has already been doing wondrous things, and making bare His arm in the sight of all nations, would do yet greater things, and things in which we are more directly and personally interested.

Yea, let us hope, let us labour, let us pray, for the whole world; and let us not fear that anything shall hinder the accomplishment of the promise that the heathen shall be given to Christ for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the Earth for His possession. Progressive development, and ultimate perfection, is the law of Christ's kingdom as regards its general advancement on Earth, as well as its establishment in the individual soul. He hath come as a light into this world; and His path has been, and shall continue to be, "as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day." "His going forth is prepared as the morning." As the sun, before he emerges from beneath the horizon, diffuses through the gloom those precursive beams which gild the clouds, and streak the skies, giving token to the watchers of his welcome approach; so did the Sun of Righteousness, before He appeared on the horizon of this Earth, herald His coming by those beams of prophecy, and those brightly significant types, of which He was at once the author and the object, the source and the end. As the sun, when approaching the horizon, and just about to burst into sight, illumines with his slant rays the summits of the opposite hills, and gradually spreads the morning upon the mountains; till at last his bright disc, rising into view, shoots its cheering rays far over the glittering sea and the smiling plains; so, when the

time of Christ's manifestation among the children of men drew near, the glad tidings of His advent were proclaimed by angelic heralds, and by messengers appointed to go before His face, to prepare His way before Him; and while, in the faith of that announcement, they who feared God's name, and waited for the consolation of Israel, praised the Lord for that "tender mercy whereby the day-spring from on high had visited them," the Sun of Righteousness, for which they watched, arose upon them with healing under His wings.

Again, as the sun, mounting into the skies, sheds abroad his fostering beams with more powerful and more genial influence, as he advances in his course; so did Christ, by His own public ministry and miraculous works on Earth, and still more by the agency of that Spirit whom He sent down when He had ascended up on high,—spread abroad the knowledge of salvation, and give light to them who sat in darkness and in the shadow of death. And, as the sun, rising to his meridian altitude, and attaining his noon-day fervour, pours down his vertical and unobstructed radiance, illumining even the deep recesses of those dells and ravines, which had hitherto lain wrapt in shade and sunk in gloom; so, even now, do we see the light of the glorious gospel of Christ shining into the dark places of the Earth. It has arisen on the isles of the sea, and awakened the song of joyful praise to God: it is gleaming across the breadth of India,—irradiating the hill country of Burmah, and penetrating into the long-inaccessable recesses of China. And the time, the set time, is assuredly coming, when the superstitions of Brahma and of Buddh, the delusions of Antichrist and

of Islam, shall all be dispelled by the mild beams of the Saviour's grace, or destroyed by the glory of His power. "He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the rivers to the ends of the Earth." "All men shall be blessed in Him, and all nations shall call Him blessed." No power in earth or hell shall be able to resist the spread of His rightful sway. "They shall fear the Lord from the West, and His glory from the rising of the sun." "For it shall come to pass, saith the Lord, that I will gather all nations and tongues, and they shall come, and see my glory." May the Lord hasten it in His time. "And blessed be His glorious name for ever; and let the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen, and amen."

Zion's Glory and Defence.

Isaiah xviii. 4.

What time by foes in strength and pride arrayed
The Church of God is compassed and oppressed,
This be her comfort, that the Lord hath said,
"Here will I dwell—here will I take my rest.

"Even as the cheering sun sheds calmly down
His clear, mild beams with sweet, reviving power,
Bursting the clouds that dark and threatening frown,
Raising to life the drenched and drooping flower;

"As hovering clouds a grateful shadow yield;
As dews fall softly on Earth's panting breast,
When sultry suns have parched the thirsty field,
And labour faints, by harvest heats oppressed;

"So though from you, my chosen ones, a while
In very faithfulness I hide my face,
Soon shall my shadowing power, my favouring smile,
Shed peace and joy throughout my dwelling-place."

ERRATA.

Page 39, line 27, for "blocked," read "blocked up."
„ 43, „ 20, „ "those streams," read "these streams."
„ 53, „ 2, „ "broken upon," read "broken in upon."
„ 65, „ 15, „ "Bramah," read "Brahma."
„ 68, „ 18, „ "mightly," read "mightily."
„ 71, „ 9, „ "greately," read "greatly."
„ 88, „ 24, „ "in desert," read "in the desert."
„ 193, „ 31, „ "He who knows," read "He now knows."
„ 208, „ 15, „ "as your creed," read "as well as for your creed."
„ 219, „ 29, „ "servant," read "servants."
„ 208, „ 23, „ "wellowed," read "mellowed."

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Of the volume of poems before us, our impression is in a high degree favourable. The author furnishes abundance of evidence that he is endowed with genuine poetic sensibility; that his mind is enriched with the stores of a varied scholarship, and that, both in theory and practice, he is conversant with that metaphysique, the existence of which is indispensable to any poetry at all, and the formal or intuitive knowledge of which is essential to all poetry of the highest order. "The Highlands" is an eminently beautiful piece of composition, exhibiting evident signs of that vivifying spirit which makes all nature "beauty to the eye and music to the ear." . . But after all, the crowning beauty and excellence of the work consists in the fine vein of morality and pure religion by which it is pervaded. It is not that here or there we have a moral or religious remark appended, like Horace's "purple patch," on a ground of coarse and ordinary materials. No; the thoughts of the author appear habitually to revolve in an atmosphere of piety, and his heart ever beats warmly to its sacred intonations. Hence it is that the larger proportion of his poetry is deeply tinged throughout with a colouring of piety, as if dipt in a fount of heavenly radiance.—*Rev. Dr. Duff, in the Calcutta Christian Observer.*

Mr Small has all the qualities of a real poet. He is a lover of nature, and possesses, withal, a power of description which enables his readers to follow him in all his wanderings. Mr Small, too, is a philosopher and a Christian, and well knows how to render tributary to all his poetic reveries all the discoveries of mental and moral science, and all the transcendent principles of revealed truth His "Scottish Martyrs" is a beautiful poem, which will live when the author has been called to

sleep with his fathers. True in general to history, it is fraught with noble sentiments, and rears a monument to the Protestant Reformation, which will perpetuate the fame of the Scottish Martyrs, and read lessons to sacerdotal tyrants in every age.—*Rev. Dr. Morison, in the Evangelical Magazine.*

"The Highlands," as most of our readers must be aware, is not a new subject; yet, as a proof that nature is not exhausted—that to Mr Small belongs the "unscaled eye," "the vision and the faculty divine"—he has handled it in a new manner, with an eye for observation as correct, and a sensibility to external beauty as quick as Scott himself. Mr Small has presented these scenes in a new light, has drawn from them new and more valuable lessons, and has linked them with new and higher and holier associations. It is impossible to read any of these poems, and not receive delight and beauty. . . The Free Church numbers many men of genius among its ministers—in Mr Small it has undoubtedly one. Devoted as he now is to a higher calling, he speaks as if it were exceedingly unlikely that he should prosecute the poet's fascinating art. We should be sorry if he did not. In the meantime, the high estimate formed of these poems by the best judges, the favourable reception they have met with, and the delight with which they are universally read, may satisfy him that he has not struck his harp in vain.—*Rev. John Anderson, author of "Patrick Wellwood," "Wanderings in the Land of Israel," &c.*

There are in the poem on the Scottish Martyrs passages of great beauty and true pathos, such as none but a true poet could have written; and what will recommend the poem still more, in the estimation of those whose estimation we are persuaded Mr Small would most value, there are passages which breathe the very spirit of deep, true, and fervent piety—not unworthy of the men whose faith and martyrdom he has striven to celebrate. If his mind should still incline to poetic composition, he may confidently hope to acquire an honourable position among the poets of his time.—*Rev. Dr Hetherington.*

The poem on the Highlands is highly creditable to Mr Small alike as a man and a poet. Although its main object is descriptive, it is imbued with a deep moral and religious feeling.—*David Moir, Esq., (Delta.)*

To say that the descriptions are graphic, is to say too little. Dozens of stanzas are like so many landscapes framed and glazed; and others are more even than this. . But Mr Small is not the man to forget that, while the fancy of the poet may delight in solitude, the heart of man is especially concerned with his fellow-men. . . The social and historical allusions are not the least valuable portions of the poem. . We take leave of Mr Small as of one from whom we have received a treat. Well should we have loved to climb with him the heathery steep, and the better shall we think of the public taste, the earlier we hear of a new edition being demanded.—*India Review.*

This little volume may well find a corner beside "The Lady of the Lake" in the portmanteau of the tourist. To the truth of the author's descriptions our own recollections can in many places testify. The poetical portion of the book is rich in fancy and elevated thought.—*British Quarterly Review.*

The pleasant flow and cadence of his rythm would have value for us, were not his verses, as they are, the musical expression of really musical thought—that is, poetry. . . . . What one finds to be the permeating tone and spirit of the volume on our table, is an extreme gentleness of heart, coupled with an intense and passionate love of nature, while over and above there breathes all through such Christian-mindness as we prize in William Cowper. . . The second poem of the volume is entitled, "The Scottish Martyrs," and one which, we have no doubt, will become popular. There are various smaller pieces, of no inferior merit. These, however, we must abstain from quoting at present, and take leave of Mr Small, heartily thanking him for the pure draught from Nature's own well-head which he has furnished us, and assured that, by God's blessing, the labours of a preacher in our own Free Church, with a heart like his, will be found to turn many souls to Christ.—*Presbyterian Review.*

The author, whose valuable productions are before us, owes to the warmth and sincerity of his zeal for the truth many of the happiest flights he has reached in poetry. . . . . "The Scottish Martyrs" will be read with interest by every Christian of taste and discernment; and the feeling at its close will be, we are convinced, not regret that it is too long, but that many more of these interesting and characteristic episodes, with which Scotland abounds, had not been given. . . The author would appear to have had the favouring judgment of able men, among whom it is evident that Professor Wilson must be included, as to the merits of his composition as poetry; and his own modesty cannot prevent us from according a very high measure of praise on the latter account.—*Christian Examiner.*

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Commencing with the opening stanzas of "The Highlands," we discovered that it was indeed the production of no ordinary mind, but that it bore the unmistakeable impress of genius, deriving an inspiration peculiarly its own from the sacred altars of Truth and Beauty. We

were led on, fascinated by the magic eloquence of our guide. . . . Every page of Mr Small's poetry is redolent of true Christian feeling. —*Border Watch.*

We advise our readers to procure the volume and peruse it for themselves, well assured that they will obtain both pleasure and profit from the perusal, if they love what is gentle, sensitive, pure, and religious in poetry.—*Scottish Guardian.* (First Edition.)

We do not hesitate to say, that for many years past so much real poetry has not appeared in so copious and compact a volume.—*Scottish Guardian.* (Second Edition.)

Since the appearance of the immortal lays of the great Novelist, the Highlands have been much run upon by aspirants to poetic fame, and from the numerous offspring of their genius we have met with none having more attractions, or breathing more freely the noble impulses of a poet's mind, than that before us.—*Scottish Herald.*

In the "Highlands," though belonging to the class of descriptive poetry, are embodied many of the dark superstitions, the deadly feuds, and the warlike deeds of the ancient Gael, which impart additional life and interest to the scenes through which we are lead. . . The second poem, "The Scottish Martyrs," contains many passages replete with genuine poetical feeling, to which recent occurrences have imparted a peculiar interest.—*Westminster Review.*

Mr Small has a poet's eye to see the beauties of nature, and a poet's imagination to group the objects that come before him in new forms of loveliness; and, better still, he has the piety of an enlightened Christian leading him to consecrate his powers to the interests of virtue and religion, and shedding over the productions of fancy and feeling a lustre, brighter and purer than can emanate from genius, however exalted, unless it be illuminated by the light of heaven. "The Scottish Martyrs" contains many passages which are not merely beautiful, but calculated, under existing circumstances, to awaken loud and deep echoes in many a Scottish heart.—*Watchman.*

With very considerable powers of fancy, and a deep feeling of enthusiasm, Mr Small has described the scenes of his romantic rambles, and recorded the historical and traditional events for which he cherishes such a warm veneration, in song that by turn exhilarates, captivates, and melts; and that will especially arouse Scotland's associations. The poetry of his stanzas, and the spirited, spirit-stirring conceptions which abound in them, are expressed vigorously, and in verse, for the most part Spenserian in its struction, that exhibits artistic skill, indicating, too, an ear and soul in harmony with strains drawn forth by the sweep and flow of a free and ready hand.—*Monthly Review.*

The reader will at once see that he has to do with a man of pure and refined imagination, possessed not only of the outward eye and ear, but of that inner sense upon which alone the silent harmonies of Nature can ever vibrate. There is apparent, too, such a command over versification as to remind one frequently of the sweet and easy numbers of the author of the Sabbath, or of our Christian poet, Montgomery. —*Witness.*

Altogether, we have read the volume with great interest and plea-

sure, and give it a cordial recommendation, as worthy of a place on the table of refined and Christian families.—*Nonconformist.*

We have indeed been much gratified with our dip into this volume. There is an excellent spirit and excellent stuff in it. The author's heart is a true one, richly informed with a love of the true, the beautiful, and the good. He has a fine eye, too, for Nature, and blends lovingly with her in her various moods—his soul feels and his eye sees her beauty, and the murmurs of the Universal Voice find a deep echo in the chamber of his secret thoughts.—*Glasgow Citizen.*

A volume of very excellent poems. Excellent both as regards the beauty of the poety, and the devotional feeling with which they are imbued.—*Western Watchman.*

The descriptive powers of the author are of a very high order, and in the varied scenery of the Highlands he has found no lack of topic; mountain and glen, loch and waterfall, the barren heath and the rich and fertile vale, are drawn in characters of light, and beam from the page with all the truthfulness that marks the reflection of the mirror. Fertile in conception, high and spirit-stirring in his delineations, clear and natural, and always beautiful in his imagery, Mr Small has thrown around the well-trodden field which he has chosen a fresher and livelier interest than we ever felt in it before.—*Glasgow Argus.*

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On a former occasion we had the pleasure of introducing a volume of the effusions of Mr Small to our readers, and of recording our high estimate of his poetical ability. The little work now before us tends to confirm the opinion we had formed concerning the taste, power, and character of the writer.—*Greenock Advertiser.*

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